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**Ships of Church and State in the Sixteenth-Century
Reformation and Counterreformation: Setting Sail for
the Modern State**

Stephan Leibfried and Wolfgang Winter

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Abstract

Depictions of ships of church and state have a long-standing religious and political tradition. Noah's Ark or the Barque of St. Peter represent the community of the saved and redeemed. However, since Plato at least, the ship also symbolizes the Greek polis and later the Roman Empire. From the fourth century – the Constantinian era – on, these traditions merged. Christianity was made the state religion. Over the course of a millennium, church and state united in a religiously homogeneous, yet not always harmonious, *Corpus Christianum*.

In the sixteenth century, the Reformation led to disenchantment with the sacred character of both church and state as mediators indispensable for religious and secular salvation. The alleged immediate relation of the individual to God led to a diverging of state and church in a long and conflictual process. Depictions of ships became of a denominational character. They mirrored conflicts over religious domination, the relationship between state and church and key dogmas. They strove to reassure the viewer of his allegiance to the respective faith and confessional state; at the same time, they tried to mobilise against the other denomination and its confessional state. Confessionalization therefore generated new (not always harmonious) religiously charged states and corresponding ships of (state-)churches. We found several on the Protestant side, while a Catholic ship set sail even without state protection.

In the sixteenth century, a contradictory trajectory began that led to a religiously neutral, secular state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which challenged churches to refrain from all theocratic claims and to redefine their identity. Religiously neutral ships of state point to this development.

Keywords

State, confessional state, neutral state, Reformation, Church, depictions of ships of church and state.

The lecture was delivered on 21 March 2012.

Stephan Leibfried

*Director, Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State, University of Bremen
Research Professor at the University of Bremen and Jacobs University Bremen*

Wolfgang Winter

*Rector emeritus of the Study Seminary of the Evangelical-Lutheran Landeskirche of Hannover,
Göttingen*

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Ships of Church and State in the 16th Century Reformation and Counterreformation: Setting Sail for the Modern State

Stephan Leibfried and Wolfgang Winter

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Content

Introduction—Ships of Church and State in 16th Century Europe: Setting Sail for the Modern State.....	5
1508. ‘The (Sinking) Ship of Church.’ Hans von Kulmbach.....	12
Ca. 1526. ‘The Ship of Church with oars deployed / dancing up and down’ and ‘Here stand the seven electors by the eagle / and the eagle stands on a ship that is well-nigh sunk.’ Jörg Breu the Elder	15
No date (before 1533). The Holy Christian Church. Artist an unknown Pauline Father	18
1545. ‘The Shipwreck of the Catholic Church,’ and 1548, ‘Christ’s Ship Threatened by the Ships of the Infidels and the Catholic Church.’ Mathias Gerung	21
1558. The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V in Brussels: The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope. Johannes and Lucas van Doetechum.....	24
1539. The Mocking of Osiander at the Schembart Carnival in Nuremberg. Artist unknown	29
1565/70. Miniature Illustrating Orlando di Lasso’s Psalms of Penance. Hans Mielich	31
1570(?). ‘The Apostels’ little ship’ Matthias Zündt.....	34
1570-1577. ‘The Christian Ship... .’ Hans Weigel the Elder.....	37
1575. ‘The Ship of State.’ Daniel Frese.....	40
1575-1600. ‘The Militant Ship of the Catholic Church.’ Pieter van der Borch I	43
1550-1600. Typus Religionis. Unknown German artist.....	46
Ca. 1760 in Spain. Typus Religionis: ‘Triumph of Faith and of the Law of the Catholic Church.’ Artist unknown.....	48
1580-1590. The Ship of State as Mechanical Galleon and Clock. Hans Schlottheim.....	52
1580 or 1640-50. The Ship of Church. One of the northern Dutch masters or Jacob Gerritsz Loef.....	55
1620. ‘The Ship of State.’ Frans Schillemans	57
References.....	60
Table: Timeline: Luther and his time—100 years of Reformation and Counter-Reformation.....	9

Introduction—Ships of Church and State in 16th Century Europe: Setting Sail for the Modern State

As we consider these 16th century emblems¹ of church and state, it is helpful to remember that they represent a particularly active period in what was already an ancient tradition of religious and political rhetoric and ritual. The ship appears as a metaphor for the protective character of religious belief in the Old Testament's story of Noah's Ark and in the New Testament's *navicella* (St. Peter's bark), and it was built into the architecture of the Christian churches, where the central area was referred to as the *navis* or 'ship' in Latin, a word that was adopted into English as 'nave' and translated into German as *Kirchenschiff*. The 'ship of state' can be traced back to the 'ship of the polis' in Aristophanes' *The Wasps* (1940 [455-388 BC]), or to Plato's *Republic* (*Der Staat*) (2008: Book VI [370 BC]), in which the process of choosing a qualified captain for a ship is exemplar for choosing wise leaders of the polis, and in ancient Rome it appeared in public rituals as a symbol of Empire (Lehmann/Lehmann 1973: 207 ff.)—these rituals include spring carnival, an abbreviation of *carrus navalis*, a ship float (p. 30, ship of fools). This history is likewise built into the etymology of the English word for government, which can be traced through the Latin *gubernare* back to the Greek *kybernan*, which meant to steer or pilot a ship (Leibfried 2008: 4-8).²

Some four hundred years after the Jewish spiritual revolutionary Jesus of Nazareth was executed by Roman rulers, the religion he inspired was adopted as the Roman Empire's state religion. Throughout Europe, church and state were fused in a *Corpus Christianum* that remained in power for over a millennium. But with the onset of the Reformation, church and state began to drift apart, first at the level of the Emperor's rule over the territories and then, over the next few centuries, in the governance of the individual territories and surrounding nations: the course to the system of governance we know as the 'modern state' was thus set in the 16th century, and we can trace it in the period's metaphoric images of ships.

The Protestant Reformation: Background

At the beginning of the 16th century, the governmental and religious institutions of the Holy Roman Empire were fully entangled in a peculiar constellation wherein the papacy was both an all-encompassing theocratic institution and a sovereign secular power structure above and beyond that of the Empire. The Catholic clergy was in a position of great financial and political power, and the Papal State had developed into 'an early modern political system with a grand style of holding court, modern war machinery, pervasive clientelism, and strict financial management' (Stollberg-Rilinger 2009: 51). In 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the gate of Wittenberg Castle's church and declared that all intermediary institutions of salvation between God and human—the obligatory *Heilsanstalten*—were superfluous, he was not only calling into question the status of the Catholic clergy in the populace's relationship to God, but also threatening the structure of governance in the Empire, and with it, Rome's theocratic hegemony. His call for the reformation of the Catholic church, in concert with Menno Simon's from Frisia, and John Calvin's from Geneva, not only initiated what would become new denominations of Christianity, but triggered a century and a half of religious and political strife in and around the Empire.

At the same time, the proliferation of new technologies for the reproduction of text and images in the late 15th and early 16th centuries—woodblock printing, the printing press, engraving, and etching—allowed for the mass dissemination of religious and political propaganda, generating what we might think of as a pre-modern 'media war.' Though literacy was on the upswing, it was still limited to a tiny

sector of the population, and visual representations played an important role, with both parties to the conflict exploiting the ancient metaphor of the sailing ship.³

Religious and political images

The ship had long represented the safe haven of Christianity, a vessel that God chaperoned through great dangers, until it and its passengers finally reached the *portus salutis*, the harbor of salvation. During the 16th century, however, the focus shifted from the salvation of the soul, to the salvation of the old or selection of new religious institutions and their ordained. For both traditional Catholics and the Catholic reformers who would come to be known as Protestants, the ship represented Christendom, and they used it to demarcate their central dogmas for salvation and their enemies and heretics for banishment to the dangerous waters.

It was a time of pestilence, civil strife and war, and the Protestants believed that the end of the world was at hand. Most of the Protestant ships either have their sails furled (p. 23 right) or the sails are missing altogether (pp. 36, 39, 42), and there is no destination or sign of movement. The Last Judgment of all human kind was upon them and the thing to do was to acknowledge and persevere in one's faith. The Catholic ships, on the other hand, have their sails set and are always in motion: They rise to heaven (p. 20⁴), or they sail toward the Pope's harbor (p. 33) or the port of heaven (pp. 45, 51); they make their way through enemy waters (p. 45) or they head for the open sea (p. 56).

The conflicts reflected in these paintings were as much about religious hegemony and the relationship between church and state as they were about religious dogma, and the powers of governance are always part of the picture: We see a single ship of church and state about to cleave in half and sink (p. 14), or separate ships struggling in rough waters, while the Kaiser's electors discuss their common fate (p. 17). The Catholics, allegedly, portray their ship of church full of clergy and monks who might, at best, throw a lifeline to the rulers and their subjects (p. 20), or they show it leading a flotilla of prison boats full of captured foreign kings (p. 33), or under attack from political tyrants on shore (p. 45). The Lutherans show the ships of the Catholic church and of the Holy Roman Empire sinking in unison (p. 23 left), or a ship of church in which the loyal Kaisers are manning the oars (pp. 36, 39), or a new ship of state with a ruler legitimated directly by Christ, this last painted directly on the wall of the Lüneburg town hall as instruction to the governors (p. 42).

During the first decades of the century, the church is generally portrayed as a single-sail dinghy unsuited to the rough, uncertain waters it confronts (e.g. pp. 14, 17, 20), but as we move into the second half of the century the boats appear more seaworthy and well-appointed (pp. 28-51, 59). Even the Catholic ships reflect an increase in confidence, as the Catholic church sets its course on reform and the Catholic Revival gets underway. In a Dutch masterwork of the ship of church from the turn of the century (p. 56), for example, we see a fully rigged ship leaving behind both the critics of its doctrines and its own claim to political rule, as it heads confidently for the open sea. This may no longer be the negative medieval conception of the sea but an Enlightenment one in the sense that the philosopher Hans Blumenberg has delineated—a sea that represents curiosity, adventure, open-mindedness, and new ideas about the route to power (Blumenberg 1997, 1988).

Reading the trajectory of ship images

For Luther the ship image (p. 20), a panel painting that he described repeatedly, represented all that was wrong with the old Catholic doctrine: the ship was filled with clergy, while the common people and their rulers were marginalized, delegated to the ship's stern or struggling in the waters. But by the middle of the century, Lutheran artists were appropriating the metaphor for their own purposes. They used it to attack the status quo (p. 23 left) and to propagate the new faith, ousting the Catholic clergy and turning the 'ship of church' into a 'ship of Christ' sailed by his apostles and the common people

(p. 23 right). Eventually, ship of church images became a vehicle of religious instruction, first for the Protestants and later the Catholics, with the ship encapsulating the core principles of their respective doctrines, and a new genre emerged in which the image was covered with elaborate textual labels that carefully governed precise interpretation of the pictorial elements (pp. 36, 39, 42; 51).

The Protestant reformers, who were not only proposing a more inclusive and pared down version of Catholic religious doctrine but also challenging the all-encompassing political power of the clergy, were eager to spread their ideas among the Empire's territorial princes and common people. They were quick to understand the power of the new print technologies and made extensive use of woodcuts and etchings that could be mass-produced as fliers or included in printed pamphlets or books. Even when they relied on paintings, these were typically displayed in a town hall or other public space (p. 42). The Catholic church, on the other hand, was trapped in its own hierarchical doctrine and slow to comprehend the new *modus operandi* of a media war that played out in the public sphere. Traditional Catholics' reflections on the ongoing problems in the church or responses to the reformers' criticisms were typically expressed in solitary works of art—an oil painting (p. 56), a hand-drawn psalm book (p. 33), a German hand-drawn copy of an Italian painting or etching (p. 39), or the float for a Kaiser's burial ceremony memorialized in a single edition print (p. 28). Catholic works produced for wider public distribution were rare and can only be found in the Empire's peripheral territories and surrounding nations (pp. 45, 51).

The church and state had long been conflated in the ship metaphor, but in the Catholic images of the second half of the 16th century, church and state begin to reemerge as separate entities: here we might see a ship of church devoid of emblems of state governance (p. 56, and inner title page), or an, at first sight, non-partisan Christian ship of state (p. 28) or a ship of state with no sign of religious influence whatsoever (p. 54, and inner title page). The Protestants, on the other hand, were keen to gain the support of the territorial princes and persisted in portraying the amalgamated powers of church and state (pp. 36, 39, 42). In the Netherlands, the Calvinist reform movement erupted as a full-out rebellion against the Spanish Catholic governors, and the urban tradesmen and rural nobles elected their own Calvinist prince in what would become the first independent republican monarchy of the world and be located outside of the Empire. This new Calvinist state is represented in one of the few Protestant ships that has its sails unfurled and appears to be going somewhere (p. 59).

En route to the modern state⁵

The laity was a main protagonist in the conflicts of the 16th century, climbing aboard the ship of church and breaking the Roman Catholic clergy's monopoly on power in the religious sphere. Though the territorial princes remained at the helms of their respective ships until well after the masses began vying for a choice of captain and crew at the end of the 18th century, the Reformation, with its newly democratized Christian churches, and its long aftermath of sectarian religious strife set a course for the democratization of secular power and evolution of the modern state in a number of senses.

With the signing of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, the Emperor, the Catholic, and the Lutheran territorial princes agreed to allow two religions within the empire: the Emperor would remain impartial on the choice of religion in the territories, the princes would be free to choose their states' religions, and subjects who didn't wish to comply with those choices would be allowed to emigrate to another territory. Legally, the agreement introduced the concept of religious choice at the institutional level, if only for Lutherans and Catholics, but it also led to an increase in sectarianism among the princes and populace of the Empire. The inherently missionary nature of Christianity meant that each faction claimed a monopoly on religious truth and fought for hegemony: the apocalyptic convictions

of the Protestant faithful made the bloody free-for-all that ensued all the more destructive, and the wars lasted until the Peace of Westphalia was signed, nearly a century later (Kaufmann 2009).

The separation of spiritual and worldly regimes that Luther preached did not, finally, lead to the ‘twofold kingdom’⁶ and the new universal church that he had imagined, but rather, to the disintegration of the *Corpus Christianum* of the Holy Roman Empire—and, gradually, to the demise of the partisan Christian state and eventual emancipation of the state from spiritual concerns (Germanisches Nationalmuseum et al. 1979: 230-4). The fundamentals of this process of ‘unintended secularization’ (Gregory 2012) are already apparent in our 16th century representations of the ship metaphor—most pronounced, perhaps, in the Dutch Catholic ship of church, sailing out to sea with no ties left to the state (p. 56), and in the Emperor’s ship of state as mechanical clock, which is devoid of all signs of religion (p. 54, and cover).

In the short term, Luther’s achievement was to ‘reduce the Pope’s church to the level of a *Partikularkirche*’ (Harnack 1910: 691), demoting it from the universal institution of God, to the church of a particular community, but his Reformation had the long-term effect of reducing all churches, including his own, to the level of community church. According to the theologian Ernst Troeltsch, ‘the state’s neutral stance with regard to the choice of Christian denomination was one of the most important changes brought about by the Reformation, as it forced the [Lutheran] church to reconceive itself,’ with an emphasis on self-reliance and community-building (2004: 340 f.). The long-term effects on the state would become fully apparent in the 19th and 20th century: ‘Because the church as such is no longer the goal of the state, the state’s reign over the church’s inner life and interest in preserving a uniform creed [among its subjects] fall by the wayside’ (*ibid.*: 344). In the teachings of both the Lutherans and the Catholics, the state was only a means to an end, but by the 20th century it had become an end in its own right. ‘The state no longer serves the glory of God, but its own glory. The sovereignty of God is replaced by the sovereignty of the state. The religious must be limited to its own sphere, and the state must be free to pursue its own goals.’ (*Ibid.*: 342.)

The Protestantism of the 16th and 17th centuries was the first element in a long, slow transmutation of the uniform religious culture of the middle ages and its divine sanction (Albrecht 2004: 12; Troeltsch 2004: 206-308 [general], 208-241 [Lutheranism]). Early Protestantism essentially sustained the middle age tradition of an exclusive religious truth and universal church, with the territorial princes instituting the practice of *landesherrliche Predigtanstalt* wherein they imposed a single church on their subjects, just as the Holy Roman Empire had, for centuries, imposed Catholicism on all its territories. It wasn’t until the 19th and 20th centuries, that the religiously neutral and secular state emerged and modern forms of Protestantism fully acknowledged the principles of free will, personal belief, and autonomous secular life (Troeltsch according to Albrecht 2004: 12; Troeltsch 2004: 340-355). Germany took the route of the religiously neutral state wherein all churches are recognized as public corporations that receive state support, whereas France and the USA adopted an entirely secular state system with religion fully relegated to the private sphere. One might say that the evolution of Protestantism from the 16th to the 20th century—from the practice of *landesherrliche Predigt-anstalt* to churches free of state influence—went hand in hand with the transformation from Christian to modern secular state (Albrecht 2004: 12 f.).⁷

Notes on Sources and Acknowledgements

Commentaries on these images are found in an assortment of unrelated literature: historical documents and analyses, scholarly Protestant and Catholic theological and historical literature, and political science literature. But for a century that was so defined by religious strife and the interwoven fates of church and state, it seemed imperative to take a more holistic view. To aid in contextualizing the story,

we have provided a timeline of the images together with important figures and relevant historical events (p. 11). Some of the basic background information for that timeline is taken from the website of the state-operated office, ‘Luther 2017’ in Wittenberg at <http://www.luther2017.de>.

We are grateful to many museums and collections around the world for providing us with high resolution images from their holdings, granting us the right to publish, and advising us in our interpretations. Thanks go as well to the many colleagues who helped us, in particular to Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (München), Christian Hecht (Erlangen), Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Münster) und Christof W. Weber (Braunschweig), and, of course, Monika Sniesg, who painstakingly assembled this beautiful brochure. Susan M. Gaines provided helpful comments on this introduction and translated it into English.⁸ We owe special thanks to Harry Bauer from UCL for his superb translation of all the image descriptions and to the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (HWK) in Delmenhorst, Lower Saxony which made the complete translation of this Working Paper possible.

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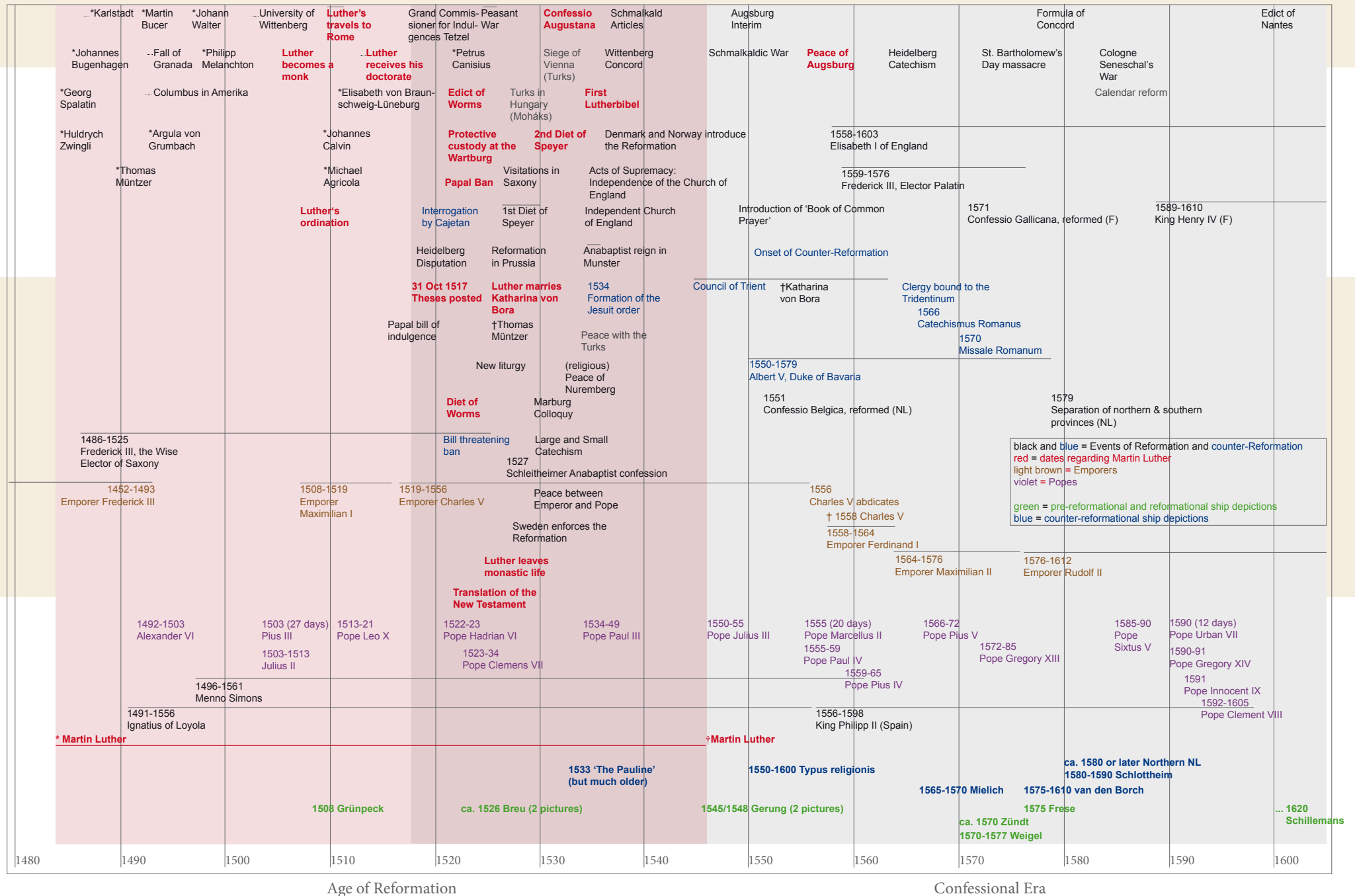
Also, many thanks are due to all the museums and rights holders on these images, who have made this web publication possible. Most of them have agreed to inserting copyright watermarks on the high resolution files in this PDF Working Paper, rather than stipulating watered down web versions (the likes of 72 dpi). That will allow you to see all the details we describe on screen or in a printout.

Stephan Leibfried, Director, Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State, University of Bremen, and Wolfgang Winter, Rector emeritus, Study Seminary of the Evangelical-Lutheran Landeskirche of Hannover, Göttingen.

1. There has been a lively debate among scholars from different fields about what to call non-linguistic metaphors. Literary scholars tend to reserve the term ‘metaphor’ for ‘an expression of speech used in a figurative sense, which relates to the referred in a relationship of similarity’ (Birus 2010b; see also 2010a and Birus/Fuchs 1989) and use the term ‘emblem’ for visual metaphors (see Henkel/Schöne 1995; for a more recent application see the controversy over Brecht’s War Fable as being ‘Marxian emblematics’ versus ‘Marxian epigrammatics’: Grimm 1978, 1979 and Wagenknecht 1978). In speaking of the ship as a metaphor for the church and state, we make no such distinctions, but employ the word to describe both linguistic and non-linguistic imagery, which would include ‘state metaphors’ (*Staatsbilder*) which Andreas Voßkuhle (2001) has analyzed for the legal sphere.
2. The ship of state image might be considered a subcategory of the ‘state-as-machine’ metaphor described in Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger’s historic study of political metaphors for the state of the 18th century (1986). Unlike the machines, however, the ship is manned and vulnerable to the elements: it requires a captain and crew to steer it, and its purpose is to give its passengers safe transport across the sea in both fair and stormy weather. It’s a metaphor that is easily adapted to different conceptions of the state—autocratic or democratic, monarchy or theocracy or Plato’s meritocracy—and to changing historic circumstance, which may help explain its longevity. The sailboat or sailing ship persisted as metaphor of choice for the state even after steamboats and airplanes were invented, experiencing periods of relative popularity or dormancy in different regions of the Western World right up to the present day. TranState’s series of holiday pamphlets in

- past years have showcased ship-of-state images from 19th-20th century Germany (Leibfried 2008), early 20th century USA (2009/2010), 16th-18th century UK (2010/11), 17th-20th century Netherlands (2011/12), and 17th-19th century France (2012/2013). The art history of ship imagery in general is addressed in Nicole Hegener and Lars U. Scholl (2011).
3. Seminal work on the imagery and iconography of the 16th century has been done by the Australian-American historian Robert W. Scribner (1941–1998), who focused on the Reformation (1981; on ships see pp. 106-15), and the German art historian Ewald Maria Vetter (1922–2006), whose work focused on Catholic ship images (1969, 1972). For later publications see also Joseph Leo Koerner (2004) on early Lutheran iconoclasm in Wittenberg and Christian Hecht (2012) on the defacto unrepentant image politics of the Catholic church.
 4. We have used social science reference style throughout this booklet, except in the case of the references to Luther's works found in the annotations of the images. These employ a modified form of the theologian's reference style and are given without year of publication as volume, part, and page in the four sections of his Collected Works. Such references are mainly found on p. 18 f..
 5. For a standard political science analysis of state-making in the 16th century see Hendrik Spruyt (1994).
 6. Modern interpretations of the two-regime teaching are discussed by Trutz Rendtorff (1981: 659-64).
 7. This transformation is not necessarily irrevocable, as we saw in the totalitarian states of early to mid-20th century Europe, or see in the emergence of the religious right as a significant political force in the USA.
 8. This collection of images has been presented on two occasions in 2013: one in honor of Hendrik Birus (comparative literature) and one in honor of Gerd Winter (public law), both on the occasion of their 70th birthdays.

Timeline: Luther and his time—100 years of Reformation and Counter-Reformation



1508. 'The (Sinking) Ship of Church.' Hans von Kulmbach

Hans von Kulmbach (Kulmbach, Upper Franconia 1480–Nuremberg, Middle Franconia ca. 1522) was a disciple of Albrecht Dürer (Nuremberg 1471–Nuremberg 1528). The woodcut and the respective book were created in Nuremberg, a *Reichsstadt* (free city of the [Holy Roman] Empire), which introduced the Reformation, in form of the Lutheran churches, in 1525. One original of *Das (sinkende) Schiff der Kirche*, among others, can be found in the Bayerische Landesbibliothek (Reference: Res/2 P.lat. 889#Beibd.3, fol. 6v¹; 12.2cm x 14.1cm). Peter-Klaus Schuster offers a description in Hofmann (1983: 201, no. 75); he in turn draws on Germanisches Nationalmuseum (1979: no. 58), Scribner (1981: 109f.) and also Bernward Deneke (Germanisches Nationalmuseum et al. 1979: 53f., *ad* 58).



Click to enlarge image.

As early as 1508, we here get a first visual glimpse of the emerging conflict. After all, Luther's theses were only proclaimed in 1517; while in 1534, the English church separated from Rome.

The woodcut is an illustration in Joseph Grünpeck's (Burghausen/Upper Bavaria 1473–Steyr, Upper Austria? after 1530) treatise *Spiegel der natürlichen, himmlischen und prophetischen Sehungen*². Twelve such prophecies are known; among them, the *Spiegel* is regarded as the most important work. The little book was first published in Latin and saw numerous German editions after 1522. Already at the beginning of the 16th century, it predicted the decline of the Catholic Church. In doing so, the text refers extensively to the bible and, especially, the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel. From 1522 onwards, this woodcut became the front page of the treatise. The German edition reads 'das Sankt Peters Schifflein soll zu disen iahren na vil fels der ungel fel zerstoßen [St. Peter's bark will in these years be smashed by numerous dangerous rocks]'. This is probably an allusion to the prophecy of disaster in Isaiah 8:14: The Lord of Sebaoth will for the inhabitants of Jerusalem become '... a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall ...'. In a somewhat unfortunate move, the author merged both metaphors. Grünpeck stands in Johannes Lichtenberger's (ca. 1426–ca. 1503) tradition of prophecies and of last day of the world-expectations; these were first published in 1488 and later, among others, edited and commented on by Martin Luther in 1527 (cf. Hofmann 1983: 175f, no. 48; also Kurze 2010).

At first glance, it is not quite clear whether the picture confronts us with one or two ships. Taking a closer look, however, a single ship seems to be depicted, whose stern is occupied by some statesmen and a scholar, while its bow already declining and breaking apart carries ecclesiastical personnel. This may mirror the closely related relationship between the Holy Roman Empire and Christian church—as well as the universities.

In the stern of the church ship, we see from left to right: a bishop (front), the pope (back), (perhaps) a monk (back) and a cardinal (front).

¹ Accessible online; <http://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/search?oclcno=165727080>; for the picture itself, see http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00011099/image_12.

² 'Spiegel der natürlichen himmlischen // vnd prophetischen sehungen aller trubsalen / angst vn // not / die vber alle stende / geschlechter/vnd gemayn//den der Cristenheyt/sunderbar so den Krebsen//vn Scorpion ausz naturliche Einflusz des hjimels // Clima od // circkel begriffenn / in kurtzen tagen geen werdenn'. In German that seems to read: Spiegel der natürlichen, himmlischen und prophetischen Visionen aller Trübsale, Angst und Not, die über alle Stände (der Gesellschaft), Geschlechter (Familienverbände) und Gemeinden der Christenheit (Gemeinschaft der Christen)—besonders soweit sie das Sternbild des Krebses und des Skorpions betreffen aus natürlichem Einfluß des Himmels, Klimas oder Sternkreises—in Kürze herniedergehen werden. In English then: Mirror of the natural, celestial, and prophetic visions of all tribulation, fear, and want across all estates (of society), gender (family networks), and communities of Christendom—especially in as far as they relate to (the constellations of) Cancer and Scorpion, influenced naturally by the heavens, the climate, or the (astrological) circle of stars—that will overcome us shortly.

A frieze with floral and animal motifs frames the entire scene displaying a lion’s head (?) in the middle above the vessel itself. Is the striking contrast between peaceful nature and the turbulent sea scenery a hidden pointer to the last days of the world, which threaten everything humanly created?³

Joseph Grünpeck was interested in the ‘occult sciences’ and astrology. All his works were put on the Index. The *Mirror* itself was put on the Index by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). In this respect, Peter-Klaus Schuster notes: ‘Already when the woodcut depicting the shipwreck was republished in another work in Leipzig in 1525, the tiara of the pope was edited out in view of the Catholic George, Duke of Saxony’ (in Hofmann 1983: 201).

At a 2008 auction of the book for £3.250, a catalogue of Christie’s summarised Grünpeck’s vita as follows: ‘Physician, astrologer, historian, and author, Grünpeck contrasts past and present, biblical and historical, in an examination of prophecy and melancholy as influenced by the cycles of the sun, moon and planets. Owing to his interest in the occult sciences, Grünpeck’s work as a whole was placed on the Index. Stuchs also published a German edition of the *Speculum* in the same year.’⁴ According to Schuster, Grünpeck worked for a time as a private secretary to emperor Maximilian I (for more details, see Czerny 1888).

With regard to the woodcut’s genesis, Peter-Klaus Schuster notes (ibid.: 201): ‘Just like Kulmbach’s depiction, Grünpeck’s prophecy about the shipwreck of the Catholic Church may draw on Sebastian Brant’s (Strasbourg 1457 or 1458–ibid. 1521) *Narrenschiff* [*Ship of Fools*] published in 1494. In its chapter 103, Brant contrasts the capsized ship of faith, whose hull is taken by the *Endkrist*/Antichrist (for details, see Scribner 1981: 148-89), with St. Peter’s bark (75a [= ibid.: 201, bottom]). Brant seems rather worried about the latter: “Sanct Peter’s bark rools heavily, / I worry about it sinking in the sea, / waves wash up against it everywhere, / it will be in turmoil and trouble” (Brant 1494/1964: 388). The woodcut in Grünpeck’s *Prophetische Sehungen* illustrates the very danger the decline of the Catholic Church poses to the Empire as a whole, beyond what Brant’s *Narrenschiff* implies; after all the emperor and other high-ranking representatives also stand in the submerging ship of church, whose sail depicts a crucified Christ.’

The image manifests significant trends of the late Middle Ages and pre-Reformation period: its anticlericalism, the communalising and intensifying of piety, the widespread expectation of and demand for church reform as well as the widely shared expectation that the last days of the world are near (for an overview, see Smolinsky 2008a).

³ For the symbolism of the shipwreck, see Rahner (1964: 298-303). For the Flood as one variety of the last judgement, see Rahner (1964: 512f.).

⁴ <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/books-manuscripts/grun-peck-joseph-speculum-naturalis-coelestis-5080865-details.aspx>

1508. 'The (Sinking) Ship of Church.' Hans von Kulmbach

Click to enlarge image.



1508, Hans von Kulmbach (ca. 1480–ca. 1522), *Das (sinkende) Schiff der Kirche* (The (Sinking) Ship of Church), woodcut from Joseph Grünpeck's (1473–after 1530) *Speculum* (Nuremberg 1508); Bayerische Landesbibliothek. The picture is potentially inspired by Albrecht Dürer (1457–1521), *Vom endkrist* (On Antichrist), 1494 (woodcut, Nuremberg; illustration in Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (Ship of Fools), see small picture above).



Ca. 1526. ‘The Ship of Church with oars deployed / dancing up and down’ and ‘Here stand the seven electors by the eagle / and the eagle stands on a ship that is well-nigh sunk.’ Jörg Breu the Elder

The 1526 woodcut (12.4 x 13.6 cm) *Die Kirch im schiff mit iren riemen genaigt / und auff und ab dantzen* is one of 41 book illustrations produced for a later edition of the astrologer Johannes Lichtenberger’s *Practice und Pronostication* (Mainz 1526). By style comparison, the British Museum attributed it initially to the Dutch artist Jan Swart van Groningen (Groningen 1490/1500–Antwerp after 1562), while it attributes it now to Jörg Breu the Elder (Augsburg 1475/80–ibid. 1536; about him: Morall 2001, Cuneo 1998), mainly active in Augsburg after 1502 as draftsman, painter, and designer. The British Museum’s Department of Prints and Drawings holds illustration 1 (museum no. 1938,0617.11.6) and 2 (1938,0617.11.15).



[Click to enlarge images.](#)

The edition of 1526 is the vernacular version of Lichtenberger’s *Pronosticatio in latina, rara et prius non audita* (Heidelberg 1488), i.e. of his booklet on *Rare and unheard-of Prophecies*. Overall, it was reprinted more than 50 times (Kurze 2010; for Lichtenberger, see also Savelsberg 1989; Friedländer 1975: 13-16; Thieme/Becker 1938: 341). Hans Hesse was the wood-block engraver producing the illustrations for the first German edition (also Heidelberg 1488). Subsequent engravers followed his model (Kurze 2010).

In terms of content, this work of Lichtenberger consists of three parts:

- Part 1 deals with the church and the bark of St. Peter, and its task to pray for all Christianity.
- Part 2 deals with the Holy Roman Empire. The Emperor has the task to shield it against greed and disobedience, especially by the Princes.
- Part 3 deals with the peasant. His task is to work to sustain the others.

The first of the depictions of a ship shown here appears in *Part One* as picture 7: at risk, yet still with the certainty that it can be maintained. What is striking here is that the sign (ship) and the denoted object (church) appear concurrently in the picture; in this way, metaphorical language is abandoned and with it its function of offering a new description of reality. This ought to reinforce the stolid, static impression of the picture. Or did the artist want to depict both areas—St. Peter’s bark and the holy church—as distinct from each other, perhaps in a critical vein?

First, Breu’s woodcut is characterised by the use of the German language. We see a most stable ‘Schifflein St. Peters’ in stormy seas and no sign of doom. As the accompanying text underneath states: ‘Doch wissen wir wol dass das schifflein sant Peters nit vundergeet/wiewol es in vielen stürmen und schlegen des möres und de windt/offt wider und für geworfen wirt’. (But we know well that the little bark of St. Peter does not sink/although it is thrown back and forth by many storms and blows of the sea and wind). The state, however, is nowhere depicted directly. The illustration appears barren, deserted. Two oarsmen sit inside the church, out of sight. The picture appears slightly tense (‘geneigt [tilted]’) and latently excited (‘und auff und ab dantzen [and it dances up and down]’).

The ship looks as if it were modelled after Noah’s Ark: It is often depicted with a building towering the vessel itself. The church here seems like a ‘mighty fortress’ (Luther’s hymn).

The British Museum points to the frame of the picture: ‘printed within an ornamental border on vertical ends with plant ornament’.

In *Part Two*, a ship appears again, now as illustration 13, but this time in the background. It is titled *Hie steen die Siben Churfürsten bey dem adler/ unnd der adler steet auff aim schiff das gar nahe undergangen ist* [Here the seven electors stand close to the eagle/and the eagle stands on a vessel that almost sank]. The

(imperial) eagle stands on the vessel; an elector with royal crown has six further electors standing in front of him. Again, 'the Ark that is the Church' is threatened. Close to destruction, these rulers—the 'pillars of the Empire' (Stollberg-Rilinger 2009: 23)¹—are urged to 'protect it with forearmed hand'. Here the British Museum notes: 'printed within an ornamental border with plant ornaments on vertical ends and angels on the horizontal ends'.

The imagery of the woodcuts points to a reformist book of the adherents of the old faith (*Altgläubige*) presenting criticism of clergy and princes based on biblical prophets and revelations (i.e., criticism of selfishness, hatred, lust, etc.) and at the same time the expectation of renewal. The texts below the woodcuts are not combative in a confessional sense, but they point to reformism with the phrase 'holy church and the bark of St. Peter'—and the certainty of maintaining it. With the image of the eagle, they also indicate hope in the preservation or renewal of the old sacred *corpus christianum*, i.e. the common erection of a Christian society by both religious and secular authorities.

Luther provided a preface to the 1527 Wittenberg edition of *Practica und Pronosticatio*: 'And his [Lichtenberger's] reformation consist of cutting off long hair, doing away with long toes on shoes, and burning of board games; those are his kind of Christians. Thus it is an altogether corporeal prophecy about purely corporeal things. In sum, his prophecy is not a spiritual revelation' However, Luther saw the book as a useful warning to 'the great lords and countries' to take the 'signs of the heavens' seriously (Luther 1527: 179f., 183, 184).

With regard to the historical context of the woodcuts: In 1526, the term 'Lutheran' was historically and conceptually still in the making. Initially, the Catholic side used it to denounce the followers of the 'heretic' Luther, then the term turned into the positive self-ascription of a new confession.

Prussia introduced the Reformation in 1525; in the midst of 1526, the first Diet of Speyer takes place: The reformationally-minded estates granted the emperor taxes to fight the Turks, but achieved that the 1521 Edict of Worms—the imperial ban on Luther and the ban on his writings—was suspended. Each imperial estate should behave in accordance to the responsibility it felt towards God and emperor. In the Netherlands, Protestantism was still an underground religion persecuted by Charles V (Gent, Flanders 1500–Monastery San Jerónimo de Yuste, Extremadura, Spain 1558), who had ruled over Burgundy and the Netherlands since 1515. The repression started with the burning of two Augustinian monks on the main square of Brussels in 1523.

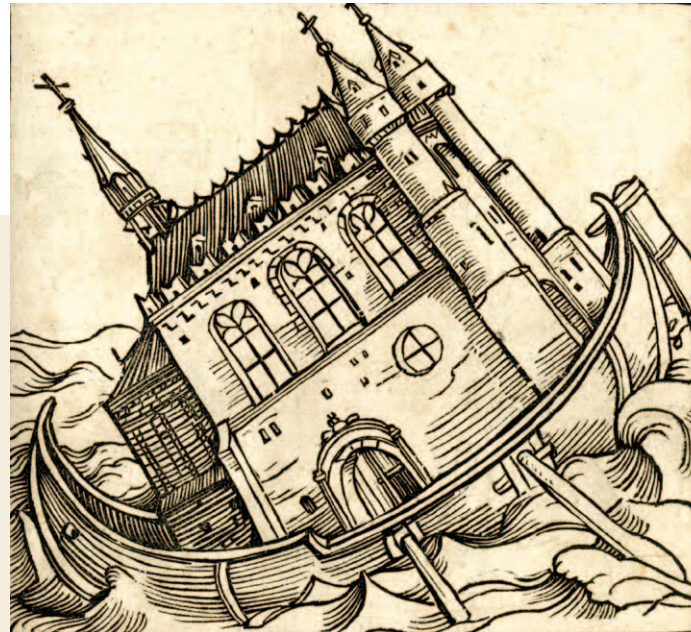
The mood of the 1488 *Practica und Pronosticatio* is outlined by Kurze (2010: col. 773) as follows: 'Apart from the fear of the Turks, the gloomy yet not hopeless mood is mainly marked by expectations of the Antichrist, the final emperor, the angel pope and church reform, primarily of a Joachimitian² provenance.'

¹ Stollberg-Rilinger elaborates: The electors 'represented the whole Empire in the sense that they could act for the whole *pars pro toto*, but also in the sense that their joint, ceremonial appearance with the emperor visibly expressed the majesty of the Empire. Therefore, depictions of "the Empire" very often show merely the emperor and electors.'

² The abbot Joachim of Fiore (Celico near Cosenza ca. 1130/35–San Giovanni in Fiore 1202) stands in the tradition of the poverty movements of the 12th and 13th century. His expectation of a third age, the age of the Holy Spirit, which supersedes the sacramentally and hierarchically shaped church, has later found wide reception. His followers are the Joachimites. They thought of the Pope and the Emperor as Antichrists and were persecuted by the Inquisition.

Ca. 1526. 'The Ship of Church with oars deployed / dancing up and down' and 'Here stand the seven electors by the eagle / and the eagle stands on a ship that is well-nigh sunk.' Jörg Breu the Elder

Ca. 1526, Jörg Breu the Elder (1475/80–1536), *Die Kirch im schiff mit iren riemen genaigt / und auff und ab dantzen* (The Ship of Church with oars deployed / dancing up and down) and *Hie steen die Siben Churfürsten bey dem adler / unnd der adler steet auff aim schiff das gar nahe undergangen ist* (Here stand the seven electors by the eagle / and the eagle stands on a ship that is well-nigh sunk), both woodcuts and book illustrations in Lichtenberg's *Pronosticatio*; British Museum.



No date (before 1533). The Holy Christian Church. Artist an unknown Pauline Father

‘This is a very old picture, conceived by a Paulian monk of Venice, the purport of which we believed as an article of faith ...’, according to Martin Luther (WA.TR vol. 4, No. 4829, p. 537). Luther had probably an earlier version of this or a similar image in mind. The presumably pre-Reformation image reproduced here (15.3 x 19.2 cm) can be found in Fabricius (1728: 27; it is also mentioned in WA.RN *ad* WA vol. 30, 2A. III, p. 96); the shading can be found in the original. Johann Albert Fabricius (Leipzig 1668–Hamburg 1736) in turn refers to Johann Wolf (1600: 855; Bergzabern, now Rhineland-Palatia 1537–Mundelsheim, now Baden-Württemberg 1600), who presents a different, much coarser and less detailed version of this picture: It lacks, for instance, the emperor, king and citizens in the water. A completely different variant of a *navicula Petri*, which had impact well into the era of confessionalization, was Giotto’s mosaic in the narthex of old Saint Peter’s in Rome (1298). In this depiction, Peter is situated outside of the vessel walking above the water to reach the hand of Christ (see Köhren-Jansen 1993: 80-134, 220-222).



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

At the stern, a church flag (tiara, the crossed keys of St. Peter’s); there, on a covered throne the pope navigating, above the dove of the Holy Spirit and a pennant—all sunlit. On each shoulder of his robe an embroidered bishop’s mure can be seen. The pope does not hold a staff (*ferula*) in his hand. On the foredeck of the vessel, i.e. the third class and the furthest away from the pope, we find some laypeople, men and women, the latter with their heads covered; when we look at the last person in the rear, we might even detect a tonsure. Amidships, four monks hold the keys of St. Peter’s and carry them towards the Virgin Mary, who stands as a shadow figure in front of the pope. By doing so, do they offer the pope the ‘power of the keys’, the ‘key of heaven’ via Mary? But, why four? A gold and silver key would be the common imagery used to represent the binding and resolving powers of the pope in heaven and on earth.

To the right of the pope, we see four cardinals with their hats and multiple-barred processional crosses, the ‘three-barred papal crosses’ (*ferula*) common since the Middle Ages. Three bishops with croziers and mitres (bishop’s hats) separate the laymen from the waist; further two bishops accompany the cardinals. Priests and monks wear the same tonsure, a sign of their dedication to God. Four monks row the ship parallel to or towards the shore. On the other side of the ship (to the right of the key bearers), a monk pokes into the water with a wooden staff; its upper part looks like a vertically attached hooked staff. To the left side of the key bearers, another rower stands equipped with a regular cross beam. Both might steer the vessel. Below the line of bishops, a woman clings to the anchor in the sea. There are also five men in the water, all to be rescued and holding on to four ropes throw to them by clerics: to the far left, we see an emperor (hoop crown) and a king, who rides on a object in the water holding a rope; on the right, we see two ‘commoners’ holding on to a rope; to the far right, on the same rope a citizen or nobleman with a hat; and a citizen who merely clings on to a rosary.

A storm rages in front and behind the ship. Spume can be seen behind the stern, but not in front of the bow. In front of the ship, the water is calm, but the clouds that come from behind out of a central ‘source’ are dark. On the left, a city with two churches lies desolate; residents race into the water towards the safety of the vessel, which seems to steer towards them.

Martin Luther (Eisleben, Saxony 1483–ibid. 1546) strongly criticised the old-religious metaphor of the church as a ship (*navicula Petri*) (WA vol. 30, part. vol. III, p. 407; with WA-RN vol. 38, p. 104; WA vol. 42, p. 368; WA-TR vol. 4, no. 4829, p. 537). In the course of confessionalization, the ship metaphor was, however, revived, now in a protestant vein. Elfriede Starke (1983: vol. I, 532f.) reports: ‘In 1532, he [Luther] also condemned as blasphemy both the depictions of the carved altar in Luneburg, because they equated the works of Christ with the works of St. Francis, and from 1533 onwards, multiple images of the church as a ship, in which only the clergy finds a place. ... Despite this condemnation of harmful visual content—at no point does he touch upon questions of artistic design—for him the images remain

adiaphora, “which ... are neither bad nor good, and it should be allowed to possess them or not; yet one should not believe that our picture serves God or provides him pleasure”’. Starke emphasises Luther’s increasing familiarity with the fine arts (533) and especially the tradition of *Merkbilder*, i.e. of ‘religious visual education’ (540).

In 1533, Luther writes in a dispute with the old-religious George, Duke of Saxony (Meissen, Saxony 1471–Dresden, Saxony 1539) about the latter’s accusation of sedition: The ‘actual’ rebels were the papists, who blurred the distinction between the secular and the spiritual, and sought to gain power over the secular estates. ‘Then, they drew a big vessel; they called it the holy Catholic Church, in which neither laymen nor kings or princes sat, only the pope with the cardinals and bishops in the bow under the Holy Spirit, and clerics, monks at their side with oars; all heading towards heaven. The laymen, however, floated in the water around the ship, many drowned, many pulled themselves towards the vessel with ropes lowered down to them by the Fathers out of mercy and their good deeds to prevent them from drowning; so they stuck to and dangled from the vessel on its way to heaven. And there was no pope, cardinal, bishop or monk in the water, but only laymen. Such an image was the manifestation of their doctrine regarding their attitude towards worldly estates, and it was an appropriate manifestation, if one looks at their literature; that’s something they cannot deny. After all, I was one of those guys who helped to teach such things and believed in them, since I did not know better’ (Martin Luther, ‘Verantwortung der aufgelegten Aufruhr von Herzog Georg’ (1533), WA vol. 38, p. 104; for the historical context and development, see Brecht (1987: 73-78)).

The picture stands in the iconographic tradition of the *navicula Petri*. It highlights the papacy’s claim to supremacy (which was disputed since the Middle Ages). During the Reformation era and the beginning confessionalization, this type of ship metaphor gains again currency in interfaith polemics. ‘One always returned to [the *navicella Petri*], when a particular theological argument was needed in support of the papacy or its supremacy’ (Köhren-Jansen 1993: 221). Moreover, the image represents the traditional and in the 16th century religiously highly significant and contested distinction between clergy and laity: The clerics find space in the vessel, while regardless of their status, the laypeople depend on clerics to enter the ship. Therefore the (few) laypeople depicted play only a subordinate role and are barely visible. This, however, will change in the course of confessionalization.

No date (before 1533). The Holy Christian Church. Artist an unknown Pauline Father

Artist unknown (,Pauliner'), without year, Die Heilige Christliche Kirche (The Holy Christian Church; potentially a woodcut); old master copy, probably pre-reformational, often copied. Its content matches a plate Luther commented on in 1533; taken from Johann Albert Fabricius, *Centifolium Lutheranium sive notitia literaria scriptorum omnis generis de B[eato]. D[r]. Luthero* (Florilegium of things Lutheran, that is bibliography of writers of all kinds on the blessed doctor Luther)..., Hamburg: Conrad, Koenig & G. Richter 1728, p. 27; SUB Göttingen.



1545. ‘The Shipwreck of the Catholic Church,’ and 1548, ‘Christ’s Ship Threatened by the Ships of the Infidels and the Catholic Church.’ Mathias Gerung

The first of these ‘Protestant agitators’ pictures’ of 1545, titled *Schiffbruch der katholischen Kirche*, shows the ship of the Catholic Church in the foreground already halfway submerged (23.6 x 16.4 cm). The picture is located in the Veste Coburg (inv. no. I, 343, 2.); a description of the picture by Peter-Klaus Schuster can be found in Hoffmann (1983: 203, no. 77).

The painter and wood engraver Matthias Gerung (Nördlingen, Bavaria 1500–Lauingen 1570) lived in Lauingen (Pfalz-Neuburg) since 1525. The Count Palatine Ottheinrich (Arnberg 1502–Heidelberg 1559) converted to Lutheranism in 1542 and supported the Schmalkaldic league. Both woodcuts originate from a period of military confrontation between the two confessions, namely the Schmalkaldic war of 1546/47. The scenery in both images is therefore quite apocalyptic: At stake is nothing less than the existence of the Lutherans, which the latter interpret with the help of the bible as the eschatological struggle against the Antichrist.

On the ship, the top of the hierarchy of the ‘old-religious’ church is gathered, from left to right: a cardinal (in front), a bishop, a monk (both in the back) and the pope (in front). The clergy is positioned around a table with a precious cup, now without use for the clergy; the cardinal offers it to the pope.

Two large letters of indulgence turn out to be of little help in this situation; two cardinals hold them in their hands to the right of the bridge of the sinking vessel.

This alludes to the sale of indulgences, which triggered the conflict that was decisive for the Reformation. The selling of indulgences *in situ* by the Dominican monk Johann Tetzel (Pirna or Leipzig 1460–Leipzig 1519) was the reason for Luther to post his famous theses in 1517. At that time, Tetzel was as grand commissioner of the archbishop of Mainz, Albrecht of Brandenburg (Cölln 1490–Aschaffenburg 1545), responsible for the sale of indulgences. It created a revenue stream that funded the construction of St. Peter’s in Rome—a new building that involved the relocation of Giotto’s *Navicella* damaging it severely in the process. Tetzel travelled through the bishoprics of Halberstadt and Magdeburg; visits in Eisleben, Halle, Zerbst, Berlin, Jüterbog and Magdeburg can be verified. Tetzel’s obtrusive slogan was among others: ‘As soon as a coin in the coffer rings / the soul from purgatory springs’ (cf. Smolinsky 2008b: 245ff.).

A flying, floating or walking dragon-like monster approaches the ship; its fiery breath has already ‘caught’ the pope’s head. In the bible, the dragon mainly appears as a sea monster, like the Leviathan, and is linked to the Apocalypse, the last days of the world, the final battle (e.g., Apoc. 12:3–17). Protestantism saw its own struggle for the right faith as part of this final battle.

In the background, in the centre and on the right, two other ships with old-religious clerics are in distress. On the left, the separately depicted ship of the emperor (with sceptre) and his court—including a king—sways alarmingly. On the shore, a peaceful group, reminiscent of the holy family, is depicted amidst a small village with a church.

Perhaps, this period is not only characterised by the fact that Tetzel provoked Luther’s theses in 1517 and was attacked by him: ‘Before his death [on the 11 August 1519], Luther had sent Tetzel a comforting letter [telling him] that he had not caused the Reformation with his sermon about indulgences but that “the child had quite a different father”’ (Ludolph 1962: 704).

The second of the ‘Lutheran agitators’ pictures’, titled *Das Schiff Christi bedroht durch Schiffe der Ungläubigen und der katholischen Kirche*, was produced by Mathias Gerung and dates to 1548. It offers a positive contrast to the image of 1545: from crisis to new salvation (23.3 x 16.3 cm). The picture is located in the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum (HAUM) in Braunschweig (signature m-gerung-wb3-0044) and is described by Peter-Klaus Schuster (in Hoffmann 1983: 203, no. 78).



[Click to enlarge images.](#)

**[1545. ‘The Shipwreck of the Catholic Church,’ and 1548, ‘Christ’s Ship Threatened
by the Ships of the Infidels and the Catholic Church.’ Mathias Gerung]**

In its upper half, the picture shows a safe ship in moderate seas with Christ in the centre standing in front of the crossed mast and emerging out of his new church. Christ turns to the regular, secure, God-trusting believers. Two apostles each stand guard at stern and bow, on the left Paul with the sword and on the right Peter with the keys, each paired with another lookalike. Perhaps the lookalikes each carry also a cut-off devil’s claw or hoofs, similar to those of the devils depicted above them. This would be an allegorical reference to the eschatological fight of Michael against the dragon/Antichrist in Apocal. In difference to Catholic depictions, the vessel is shown to carry no clergy but merely ‘ordinary’ people, laypeople—poor, simple-minded and pious.

From the ship two Angels fight off attacks by two dragons, which attempt to capsize the ship by their blow. They sit on the bow of the ship of the Turks, in which two turbaned figures are depicted with their weapons. And sitting on the bow of the Catholic ship, which is occupied by the pope, a cardinal and three monks, another dragon blows (top right). The Turks and the pope are here together depicted as Antichrists, who fight against the new, true faith.

In the foreground, the ship of unbelief—it is about to capsize and to break apart, while it is populated with fiercely gesturing passengers who fear for their lives. However, they all are laypeople and not, as often in such representations, old-religious clerics. The ship’s mast carries a pendant depicting a hat.

In the water are now a bishop, a cardinal, three animals, hell hounds (two in the front in the centre, one in the back on the right) and large bundles of goods, since unbelief amasses worldly wealth. To the left of the two clerics in the water, we see a part of another sinking ship with laypeople on board.

The picture displays the Lutheran resistance against any attempt of re-Catholicization; the former continued after the Schmalkaldic War was lost in the 1547 battle at Mühlberg against the emperor Charles V. The Augsburg interim of 1548, which was imposed on the Lutheran estates by the emperor to pacify the situation, did not end the theological, publicistic and political dispute. This was only achieved by the Peace of Augsburg seven years later.¹

As we have shown, Luther rejected the ship metaphor as Catholic, as preoccupied by the clergy. Artists such as Mathias Gerung, however, populate the vessel now with laypeople and make it thus acceptable to Protestantism. They turned the ship of church as epitome of criticism into an image of new devoutness. The layman’s analogy finds a parallel in the debate around the ship of state, yet with significant delay. Then the dispute centres primarily on the relationship of ‘officers, crew and captain’; it therefore found repercussions in the conflicts linked to the democratization of the state mainly since the 19th century.

¹ For the theological dispute about the interim, see Dingel (2005). Pieces about the political struggle of the imperial estates with the interim can also be found in the same volume.

1545. 'The Shipwreck of the Catholic Church,' and 1548, 'Christ's Ship Threatened by the Ships of the Infidels and the Catholic Church.' Mathias Gerung

1545, Mathias Gerung (1500–1570), *Schiffbruch der katholischen Kirche* (The Shipwreck of the Catholic Church; woodcut, Veste Coburg) and 1548, *Das Schiff Christi bedroht durch Schiffe der Ungläubigen und der katholischen Kirche* (Christ's Ship Threatened by the Ships of the Infidels and the Catholic Church; woodcut, HAUM).



1558. The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V in Brussels: The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope. Johannes and Lucas van Doetechum

With significant delay, a first verifiable picture of old-religious leaning emerges, seemingly unimpressed by the Reformation: It is a copperplate print showing a float that took part in one of the most prestigious European solemnities of its time (akg-images: No. 117000, and also Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp; as shown below with the text removed approx. 26 x 32.5 cm, one of 33 copperplate engravings in the volume *Magnifique* (1559: 5, covering two pages, 44.5 x 62 cm).



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

This coloured engraving was produced by the brothers Johannes (Deventer 1530–? 1605) and Lucas (Deventer 1554–? 1584) van Doetechum based on a drawing by Hieronymus Cock (Antwerp 1518–ibid. 1570), a publisher, painter and engraver in Flanders. (For an interpretation cf. Schrader 1988.)

The funeral service in Brussels followed the death of Charles V (Gent 1500–Monastery San Jerónimo de Yuste, Extramadura, Spain 1558). Reports from ancient Rome (Lehmann/Lehmann 1973: 212) already indicate that floats in the shape of ships were used in ceremonial processions. Here we are confronted with the first ‘official’ Catholic representation of the ship of state in the 16th century. For the solemnities, see *Magnifique* (1559), Lesbroussart (1820: 268ff.), Burgon (1839, vol. 1: 241-53 = ‘Clough’s description of Charles the Fifth’s funeral’; for the ship itself, see 247-250¹) and Strong (1991: 167-69). We thank Christof F. Weber (TU Braunschweig) for his tutoring with regard to the emblems shown.

The image of the ship refers to Jason and the Argonauts. The ship measured 24 English feet (ca. 7.9 m), weighed about 20 tons, was surrounded by explanatory plaques and was moved by invisible carriers hidden under the construction. Four horse-like creatures (in the back with trunk and tusks) seem to pull the whole construction and were described as ‘sea monster’. These animals were called ‘Hippokampos’. The Renaissance borrowed them from ancient representations: There they pull among others the vessel of Neptune, who ‘calming the waves’ is according to Vergil the ideal model for the Renaissance prince.²

The sea-bound travels and victories of the emperor are depicted on the shipside facing the viewers. And: ‘The sea wherein the shippe went, (was) stuck full of banners of the Emperoure’s armes, standyng upright; and amonxt them, many banners of the Tourks and the Moores, fallen down and lying in the watter’ (Burgon 1839: 247). Following Lesbroussart (1820: 269f.), the four islands (one is hidden behind the ship) represent his conquests in India, in Barabaria—i.e. the Barbary Coast in present-day Maghreb—in Peru and New Spain (at its maximum in 1763 ranging from current Venezuela to present-day Canada).

So far, this is a classic depiction of virtues, which does not point to the Reformation but the Turks, although the counter-Reformation was in full swing around 1550, and the wars of liberation had already begun in the Netherlands. The Peace of Augsburg (in short: *cuius regio, eius religio*; or: whose realm, his religion) was signed in 1555.

Spes in the bow keeps the anchor. With cross and chalice, *fides* sits in the centre on a stone with the inscription Christ. *Caritas* steers in the rear of the ship with a burning heart at a stick.

The sails were black. According to Lesbroussart (1820), the extended rear sail carried the following full inscription in a hardly visible rectangle: Imp. Caes. Carolo. Max. (*Maximo*) P. F. (*Protectori Fidei*) Aug. (To the supreme ruler Caesar Carolus, the protector of the faith, the august.) Gal. Ind. Turc. Aph. Sax. ([ruler of] Gaul?, India, Turkey, Africa?, Saxony [i.e. the conquered or liberated countries respectively]). This can be read programmatically and entails a claim to world rule). What follows is a eulogy to Charles’ *singularis humanitas* (outstanding humanity) and *incomparabilis ardentissimaque religio* (uncomparable and most glowing religiosity) and his *justitia*, *pietas* and *virtus* (justness, faith, and virtue; all our

¹ Appendix XXII with other details about the ship (pp. 486) was however not printed.

² For the fountains of Neptune, see Pandey (1998: 185-190). For the history of these mythical sea creatures, see Gessner (1558).

**[1558. The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V in Brussels:
The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope. Johannes and Lucas van Doetechum]**

translations), with which he became the victor over many nations. Particularly emphasized are the restoration of the kingdom of Tunis and the liberation of its Christian population, the restoration of the kingdom of Tremessa (Algiers), the capture of Libyan cities and a monastery there as well as the pacification of the insurgent and tumultuous Germania.³

With regard to the symbols of rule at or directly on the vessel:

- ‘Rownde about the sterne of the shippe was paynted all the armes oft the kingdoms whereof Charles the Emperoure was kyng’ (Burgon 1839: 247f.) and thus excluded his duchies, counties, etc. The coat of arms of the respective kingdoms would be: the one of Burgundy (since 1506), Castilla (1518), Aragon (1519), thus also Naples, Sicily and Sardinia, and of the Habsburg lands (1519), At the vessel’s stern, one can see five symbols, which are hard to identify and do not entirely correspond to the coats of arms depicted, namely from right to left: a turtle (?); a black man with head bandage; five golden symbols on blue background (?); a leaping beast of prey (?). Christof F. Weber reports: ‘The two coats of arms in the centre below the stern castle may be the one of old Austria [the ‘lark coat of arms’ on a blue background; old Austria = Habsburg core lands ...] and Corsica [the head of a moor of royal Aragonian origin, since Corsica was a part of the Kingdom of Sardinia and Corsica; the headband was originally a blindfold]. The heraldic animal in the coat of arms on the far right looks almost like a turtle, ...’. Are these symbols perhaps meant to represent the five continents in an Empire on which the sun never set? Burgon’s description might perhaps refer to the back of the rear, not depicted here, or the also not depicted ‘mirror’, which is usually extensively decorated as ‘the culture part’ of the ship.
- On the ship, we see from left to right the flags of those countries ruled by Charles V as ‘governor’: Zellande (Zeeland), Zutphen, Salins (these days Salins-les-Bains), Limburg, La Franche Comté de Bourgogne, Namur, Luxembourg, Malines (Mechelen), Tyrol, Hollande, Artois, Roßilon (Roussillon), Charrolois (Charolaise, French county), Haijnault (= Hainault, Hennegau) and Frize (Frisia).

An empty throne is positioned behind the main mast. Regarding the masts:

- In front, the flags of Spain (with Sicily) and Habsburg-Burgundy fly at the foremast together with a long pennant depicting the ‘golden fleece’, a golden ram fur, in the centre. Above one can see a cloud through which golden rays burst and below golden drops fall miraculously upwards. The rays of the sun represent a Burgundian maxim (Slanička 2004: 67). The fleece and the dewdrops refer to the respective Burgundian order. They identify the carrier as a *miles christianus*, a soldier of Christ. Charles V was grand master of the order and wore the emblem, according to Titian’s picture of 1548, at the Battle of Mühlberg (Karl V. 2000).
- The fleece refers originally to Jason and the Argonauts, who according to Greek mythology stole it from the grove of Ares at Colchis (von Ranke-Graves 1965: 227-230). Since Jason was considered a morally dubious character (he abandoned Medea), the Burgundians replaced him later with the impeccable biblical hero Gideon. The Book of Judges (6:36-40) reports that God encouraged him to great deeds at the battlefield by the miraculous falling of dewdrops on a ram fur (Huizinga 1961: 115f.). Here, like in the case of the main mast, an emblem with religious significance (golden fleece) would be associated with a visual maxim of Habsburg-Burgundy.
- On the main mast a golden flag can be seen depicting the double-headed eagle of the Empire with the red and white coat of arms of Austria as escutcheon. The upper pennant on the mainmast shows a golden pelican feeding its young with his blood (Christian symbol) as well as a cross covered with flint and the spark of a flint stone (Burgundian maxim). The lower pennant on the mainmast shows the crucified Christ accompanied on the right and left by an angel and underneath Charles motto, the Pillars of Hercules crowned with the imperial and royal crowns and the imperial maxim *plus ultra*.
- In the back, on the mizzenmast, we find the flag of the Austrian hereditary lands that combines in squares the one of old Austria (five golden eagles in blue) and new Austria (barred shield [*Bindenschild*]). Unfortunately, we are unable to identify and interpret the two objects depicted in the white crossbeam of the barred shield.

³ According to Burgon (1839: 247f.) the two poems of praise were ‘upon the 2 sydes of the shippe ... writyn’ and a list of heroic deeds (the results of these ‘voyages and victories’, i.e. new acquisitions, are not identical with most of Charles’ old dominions identified on the flags) presented at a ‘large square frame of black cloth’. The printer of the 1559 print shown here apparently placed this ‘frame’ on the rear sail and cited only the beginning of the text. The poems on the ship’s walls he omitted completely. Instead, he placed the complete text below the image of the vessel, which we can, however, only decipher partially in the version available to us.

**[1558. The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V in Brussels:
The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope. Johannes and Lucas van Doetechum]**

On the two Pillars of Hercules, resting on two rocks in the middle of the sea, we can read:

- On the left: *Monstrorum domitor temporis ipse tui*. You yourself are the conqueror of the monsters of your time. Above a ‘closed crown’, to which Charles is entitled as the king of Spain.
- On the right: *Jure tibi Herculeas simpsisti signa columnas*. Rightly, you have chosen the Pillars of Hercules as your standard. Above an ‘imperial’ or ‘open crown’ respectively, i.e. the Rudolphine imperial crown, to which Charles is entitled as the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

According to Greek mythology, Hercules erects the pillars at the Strait of Gibraltar to mark the end of the world. He equips them with the warning ‘nec’ or ‘non plus ultra’, ‘nothing beyond this ultimate point’. In contrast, the pillars of Charles V are equipped with ‘plousse houlltre’ (in his German lands and Burgundy) or ‘plus ultra’ (in his Latin lands). Charles V ‘went further’, for instance, to South and North America. One might read this as a reference to his rule of many peoples, many ‘nationalities’ beyond the ‘German nation’ and perhaps also as a reference to the dissemination of the ‘one’ religion to ‘foreign shores’. Context: ‘It will be remembered that the (coat o)f arms of Spain are represented by Spanish dollars between two pillars, inscribed with the words plus ultra’ (Burgon 1849: 250, fn 1).

Strong summarizes (1984: 96), ‘for the last time the pillars of Hercules and the ship of Jason and the Argonauts, the emblems of the two heroes of the House of Burgundy, were used to pay tribute to an emperor whose piety now carried him to greater glory in the world to come’.

Around and under the vessel, more heroic deeds of Charles V are presented on boards. They are anyway hardly legible, but in our reduced reproduction they become undecipherable and are therefore not presented here (the size of the engraving plus the legend is 29 x 36.2 cm). We convey these lines following Lesbroussart (1820: 269f.). They may also refer to the four large pictures on the ship’s wall:

AD INDIAS (About the Indies)⁴

Neither the thirst for gold, nor desire for pure fame,
Nor the love of rule urged you to shoulder such endeavours,
It was rather the pious worry about mankind that drove you
To explore unknown shores with vessels;
To bring the holy and dedicate those peoples to Christ
Through the pouring of redeeming spring waters.⁵

AD INDOS (About the Indians)

Success and the certain hope to gain what you strived for have not lost you, emperor.
Since the religion departed from Iberian shores,
Neptune paving the way and the Tritons calming the waves,
—the glorious among your emblems—and glided over the sea,
It finally reached shores rich in gold,
And brings new light to those souls in darkness.

HEROIC DEEDS

Of his own accord, he battled the enemies of the name of Christ
And also those of Christians, pressing them hard
And preventing injustice.
When the princes and provinces of Germania
Were in revolt, he tamed them,
He took their fortresses and cities with force,

⁴ These headings can only be found in Lesbroussart (1820), but neither in Burgon (1849) nor Magnifique (1559).

⁵ That is the Christian baptism.

**[1558. The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V in Brussels:
The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope. Johannes and Lucas van Doetechum]**

While the princes' forces were widely dispersed
And pacified Germania.

Among those listed were also Germania's rescue from the troops of Suleiman and maritime victories against the Turkish fleets.

The texts about the ship displays more clearly than the ship itself Charles V's impressive but unrealisable claim to a worldwide *corpus christianum*. In accordance with this claim, Charles V attached such high significance to the victory against the Lutheran Princes in the Schmalkaldic War in the Battle of Mühlberg in April 1547 that he devoted to it the frontispiece in the west portal of his new palace in Granada (Rosenthal 1985: 89ff. (91) and plates 61, 63, 66).

Indeed, a new 'confessional' era began with the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. The truth claims of religion had been suspended at the political level, the heretics—at least the Lutherans with their *Confessio Augustina*—were now recognized as a religion by the imperial state, although this did not constitute rights at the individual level and remained only enforceable for the imperial estates (Stollberg-Rilinger 2009: 61). In this new world, church and state were not necessarily one. In 1552, the Spanish bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas (Sevilla 1474—near Madrid 1566) had published his *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, in which he accused the Spanish conquerors of exploitation and extermination of the 'Indians'.

With regard to the overall order of the Empire, Stollberg-Rilinger (1972: 63) summarized the situation at this saddle point of this transition period as follows: 'The Peace of Augsburg was a milestone in constitutional history. Even though it could not permanently resolve religious issues, it prevented that the emerging religious rift damaged the Empire's constitutional order. It legalized and formalized confessional coexistence, while it left questions of theological truth unresolved. This meant a break with the medieval understanding of a divinely justified order, which was only conceivable as a harmonious and irresolvable unity of secular and religious law—especially, since human law based its legitimacy on its compliance with divine law. ... The Peace of Augsburg separated the religious and political order for the first time, since it forced two competing religious truth claims to lasting coexistence—a process of tremendous and initially hardly recognized scope, which applied, however, only to the level of the imperial Federation. At the level of individual countries, the Peace in turn opened the opportunity to unite secular and religious power in the hand of a territorial ruler'. For the German states, we find however—apart from the Lüneburg Town Hall (at pp. 40 ff.)—no more images that would unite the ships of state and church, in contrast to the situation outside of the Empire, like in the Netherlands or England.

1558. The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V in Brussels: The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope. Johannes and Lucas van Doetechum

1558, Johannes (1530–1605) and Lucas (1554–184) van Doetichen, The Solemnities for Emperor Charles V (1500–1558) in Brussels: The Ship of State and the Virtues of Faith, Love, and Hope (coloured engraving; Museum Plantin-Moretus, akg images).



1539. The Mocking of Osiander at the Schembart Carnival in Nuremberg. Artist unknown

Adopting a ‘view from below’, the depiction of the Brussels solemnities for Charles V (pp. 24 ff.) has to be juxtaposed with the mockery of Osiander at the *Schembartlauf* in Nuremberg in 1539, a pen drawing with water colourings from the same period (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum; 31.4 x 57 cm; picture description: Scribner 1981: 171-3; Germanisches Nationalmuseum et al.



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

1979: 226f., *ad* 257). The Nuremberg pen drawing of 1539—described as *Die Verspottung Osianders auf dem Schembartlauf in Nürnberg*—provides an illuminating contrast to the Brussels image of 1558. We removed it therefore from the overall chronology and discuss it here in relation to the depiction of the solemnities. The drawing would otherwise remain without direct counterpart and would appear in chronological order before Mathias Gerung’s woodcuts of 1545 and 1548.

Andreas Osiander (Gunzenhausen, Franconia 1498–Königsberg, Prussia 1552) was a prominent theologian and reformer in Nuremberg, which was Protestant between 1525 and 1549. The *Schembartlauf* was a carnival parade organized by the sons of patrician families; it revolved around a showpiece with hell as leitmotif and often a ship of fools, immortalized in literature by Sebastian Brant in 1594. From 1468 on, it was held in multi-year intervals, was banned after 1525, revived in 1539 but then again immediately and permanently banned (see Scribner 1981: 71f.). In 1539, the motif of the ship as ‘most popular element of European festival activities’ was turned into a depiction of hell, depicting Osiander with beret and gown at the bottom of the mast. He was shown ostentatiously holding a board game, which was banned as vice. The depiction of ships in public parades dates however back to antiquity and may have also coined the term carnival (= *carrus navalis*; Lehmann/Lehmann 1973: 203). Osiander can be seen in the masthead with the devil holding keys above his head.

The historical backdrop is Osiander’s attempt ‘to enforce the sole use of private absolution in Nuremberg, which he considered the right use of the “office of the keys”’ (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, *ibid.*). Both the city council and citizenship rejected his claim to the spiritual and moral control of the individual. One should be wary ‘to establish a separate church, judicature and tribunal’. With this, one ‘unbuckles the sword and gives it to others’, so the Nuremberg lawyer Scheurl (quoted in Seebaß 1978: 85). One probably blamed Osiander also for the suppression of festival activities and secular games. The participants of the *Schembartlauf* also stormed Osiander’s house. Luther criticized the revival of this folk festival tradition.

1539. The Mocking of Osiander at the Schembart Carnival in Nuremberg. Artist unknown

The depiction of the solemnities for Charles V (see above) are complemented by a view of festivities 'from below': 1539, unknown artist, Die Verspottung Andreas Osianders auf dem Schembartlauf in Nürnberg (The Mocking of Osiander at the Schembart Carnival in Nuremberg), a pen drawing with water colourings (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg).



1565/70. Miniature Illustrating Orlando di Lasso's Psalms of Penance. Hans Mielich

This illumination by Hans Mielich (Munich 1516–ibid. 1573) is taken from a book of songs (60 x 44 cm) that presents the penitential psalms of Orlando di Lasso (Mons, County of Hainaut, Habsburg Netherlands/now Belgium 1532–Munich 1594). It is situated in the Bayerische Landesbibliothek (manuscript mus. Ms. A2, p. 173).



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

A precise picture description in Ewald Maria Vetter (1972: 147f.¹; panel XLIX, 81) reads: 'Produced by Hans Mielich between 1565-70 on behalf of Duke Albrecht V [Munich 1528–ibid. 1579], one of the miniatures illustrating the penitential psalms of Orlando di Lasso shows a transfigured Christ, who sits in state and with blessing gesture close to a flag with a cross in the "masthead" of a vessel, which is steered by Peter and powered forward by five strong rowers Angels with the tools of suffering hover around him, and the evangelists preach the gospel under the sound of trombones from the clouds. Images of the apostles adorn the sail; the Virgin Mary sits on it in a glory of rays. There is a group of saints gathered on the balcony-like extended first top; here, the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers—probably providing fair wind. One can distinguish bishops and members of religious orders, among them St. Dominic and St. Francis. More saints crowd at the rear to the feet of St. Peter as well as the bow;² some who appear to be apostles point to the sea with excited gestures, while the others in religious habit fend off a fleet of the devil with bows. The spiritual dignitaries gathered around the mast also intervene in the fighting by using fire and lances. Against this effective defence, the attackers in their boats steered by infernal spirits seek in vain to protect themselves with their shields; one or the other is hit and plunges into the rough sea, which is populated by monsters. In the foreground, the devil himself points his arrows towards the vessel together with death and reinforced by a naked figure with a slingshot, which perhaps represents the world. The scene opposite shows how three men are forced into idolatry and to bring a further sacrificial animal by a fourth one, who appears to be a Turk according to his clothing. The ship is followed by three boats, which are ferried by saints and men with crowns, and transport foreign looking prisoners;³ two similarly manned boats, apparently also with Turkish prisoners, navigate forwards close to a pier, on which a pope and his entourage accept the tribute of two unspecified persons.⁴ Above the Vicar of Christ, the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers as a sign that the tribute is not paid to him personally but to the office he exercises. The illustration's Latin explanation reveals the relationship between the subject and text. Psalm 148[14] is significant here: 'Hymnus omnibus sanctis eius filiis Israel populo appropinquanti sibi [the praise of all his saints, the sons of Israel, the people drawing nearer to Him; our translation]'. In the frame [at the top of the illustration], the saints are united with the prophets and patriarchs to praise God; the people closing in are addressed by the image of the 'naucula Petri, cui si quis appropinquavit uitam aeternam habebit, super eam enim est aedificata ecclesia Dei. Math. 16'⁵ [i.e. the image of 'Peter's boat,

¹ Cf. also Vetter (1969: 17, *ad fig.* 11).

² For old-religious believers, the saints are independent mediators of salvation. According to the *Confessio Augustana* XXI, they are only *exempla* of faith and good deeds. With regard to images: The latter are not suitable as devotional images but 'useful' as 'Merkbilder', as images of instruction (Luther).

³ Vetter (1969: 18, *fn* 90) adds: 'The faience plaque in Anagni [in the choir of the 1545 Franciscan church of Sant' Angelo—see Vetter p. 17] qualifies them as Hebrews. The engraving mentioned in the following and covered in more detail in another context allows a more accurate interpretation; they represent the overpowered persecutors of the Church: Jews, Roman emperors and Christian kings'. In this way one could argue that the various hostile ships of state were conceived in dependence of the ship of church.

⁴ Vetter indicates in footnote 176 that 'the pope potentially conducts the rite of baptism'.

⁵ Vetter refers in footnote 177 to Samuel Quicchelberg's explanation: 'München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus., Ms. A 2, Erläuterungen pag. 173: Sancti, prophetae et patriarchae ibi laudant Dominum et inferius est naucula Petri ... [i.e. the saints, prophets, and patriarchs are praising the Lord there, and below (on the image) is Peter's bark.] See also Sermo XXXVII of the *Pseudo Ambrosius* (fn. 53), col. 700: "Hanc igitur solam Ecclesiae ascendit Dominus, in qua Petrus magister est constitutus, dicen-do Domino: 'Super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam'. Quae navis in altum

they who draw nearer, shall have eternal life. On it (the ship) I will build my church'; our translation]. On the lower part of the frame, the 'civitas supra montem [the city on the hill; our translation]' is depicted, i.e. the church widely visible in the activities of its members: its walls unsuccessfully attacked by storms'.⁶ In the middle of the frame, Moses with the tablets and John the Baptist with the Lamb of God point to the salvation-historical context of the voyage.

To clarify: In the Hebrew text, the saints, sons of Israel and the people are represented as separate groups like in Samuel Quicchelberg (Antwerp 1529–Munich 1567) depiction, which follows Catholic tradition; they rather represent 'everybody'.

The picture shows a 'Tridentine' ship of church and has therefore to be interpreted before the backdrop of the Tridentine Council (1545-1563; see Schatz 1997: 165-214; Holzem 2008), at which the Catholic Church had redefined its doctrine and modernized its institutions.⁷ The *navicula Petri* is organized in a sacral-hierarchical fashion: above Christ, then Mary and the saints; below the pope with the powers of the keys, the clergy, members of religious orders—but perhaps already also with laypersons in the background. In the sea, we can then find three groups:

- those that are hopelessly lost (with the devils);
- those that have been conquered and entrapped (in tow of the vessel and still able to be converted (?));
- those that are forced into idolatry (they had still to be rescued).

On the ship are the consecrated and potentially those laypeople that entered the ship with their help. Vetter does not mention the latter group. Laypeople at different degrees of endangerment and princes can be seen outside or still outside of the vessel.

Depicted here is a 'sacral-institutional type of Tridentine Catholicism' (Holzem 2008: 367f.). Luther polemicizes against the control exercised about the access to the vessel. Protestant ships are therefore principally manned in a different manner.

saeculi ita natat, ut pereunte mundo, omnes quos suspicit, servet illaesos [This ship of church, of which Peter has been appointed the master, is out-matched by the Lord alone, when he says: 'On this rock I will build my church'. This ship will sail through the depths of the centuries to come and, when the world bursts asunder, protect those received on it. Our translations.]''.

⁶ Vetter refers in footnote 178 to further 'explanations (fn. 177), p. 173: (Inferius in forma ovali) Ciuitas supra montem posita est, dicit enim Dominus discipulis, Vos estis lux mundi. Non potest ciuitas abscondi supra montem posita etc.—sic luceat lux uestra coram hominibus ut uideant opera uestra bona, Math. 5. B. Item Paulus dicit: Ut sapiens architectus fundamentum posui, alius autem, supra aedificat, unusquisque autem uiderat quomodo supraaedificet etc. 1 Corinth, 3 B. [(Underneath, in the oval shaped form) The city is on the hill, as the Lord has taught his disciples. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden., etc.—In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven, Matt 5:14-16. Also, Paul says: By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds, etc. 1 Corinthians 3'.]

⁷ Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (1972: 65) assessed the Council as follows: The Catholic Church used it 'to catch up with many developments Protestant princes had initiated in their countries. In the following, she relied mainly on newly established religious orders, especially the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)'.

1565/70. Miniature Illustrating Orlando di Lasso's Psalms of Penance. Hans Mielich

1565/70, Hans Mielich (1516–1573),
Miniature Illustrating the Penitential
Psalms of Orlando di Lasso (1532–
1594), an illumination (Munich;
Bayerische Landesbibliothek).



1570(?). ‘The Apostels’ little ship ...’ Matthias Zündt

Matthias Zündt’s (Nuremberg 1498?–Nuremberg? 1586?) etching located in the British Museum (No. 1871,1209.4735) is entitled *Diss Apostel schifflin ist ain für bildung der Christliche[n] Kyrchen ...*¹. The complete title can be found in fourteen lines of lettering at the lower centre² (This ship of apostles is an exemplar Christian church ...; 29.8 x 39.5 cm). For an interpretation of the picture, see Vetter (1969: 27–30, *ad* 17; 1972: 154–6, *ad* table LI, fig. 83) and Smith (1983: no. 185). It is a Protestant confessional image and already a *Lehrbild* [instructive image], which is its first feature.



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

Ewald Maria Vetter (1972: 154) reports: ‘The 1570 engraving of Matthias Zündt ... // ... represents a modification in a reformational vein of the model already well-known through Mielich’s miniature and the painting in Daroca³ ...’ (1969: 27f.; also 1972: 154). Vetter (1972: 41) interprets the Spanish engraving *Triumpho de la Fee* [the triumph of the faith] ... of 1760 as a late synthesis of older images, which originate in Italian works of the early 16th century (1972: 148f.), and which Zündt varied in a reformational sense as it were. A new perception of the church is now prominently turned into new visual depictions.

In the centre of the picture, the *notae ecclesiae* (characteristics of the [new] church) of the 1530 *Confessio Augustana* (CA) are represented, each with its respective biblical justification:

The depiction of the church as a ship is justified with reference to Matt. 8: Calming the storm on the lake depends on faith alone. It is not justified with Luke 5:3: Here Jesus boards the vessel of Simon Peter—the church as *navicula Petri*, later steered by his papal successors.

Christ is shown with the cross, which doubles as the mast bearing the inscription: ‘The high altar of the lord, where he shed his holy blood for our sins’. At the mast attached is a flag displaying the motto: ‘Watch, stand in the faith ...’ (1 Cor. 16:13). Christ invites ‘all you who are weary and burdened’ (Matt. 11:28). *Solus Christus*, i.e. only Christ (and no mediators), and *sola fide*, only faith (and no mediation; also, no meritoriousness and no good deeds)—CA III and CA IV—are *articuli stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* (the church stands or falls by these articles of faith; our translation).

According to CA IX and CA X baptism and communion are the only sacraments: To the left of the mast, a priest is shown baptising a child, justified with reference to the bible (Luke 3). To the right of the mast, two priests administer the communion to a woman and a man, again justified with reference to the bible (1 Cor. 11).

Above the vessel, the divine sun of grace shines on the scenery; the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove is also present with the legitimising biblical saying: ‘You are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’ (Luke 3:22). Overall, this depicts and justifies the Tridentine protection of the Protestant vessel.

Gathered in the bow and stern, we see those biblical persons who hold the office of preaching the gospel (*ministerium ecclesiasticum*) according to CA V: John the Baptist stands on the bow. His mission: ‘Prepare the way for the lord, make straight paths for him’ (Matt. 3:3.8). In the rear, we find eight apostles among them Peter and Paul, all equipped with their order: ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel ...’ (Mark 16:15).

¹ The German text reads in full: ‘Diss Apostel schifflin, ist ain für bildung der |Christliche[n] Kyrchen, das von dem ungestimen |Mer, von einem ort Zum anderen getrieben wirt, |Aber doch der ewige Son Gottes, sin schifflin oder |Kirch, von Anfang der welt bis zu unseren zeyten |Genedig erhalten hatt. W.der alle falsche lerer, und |Verfolger der Christen laytt Gott welle uns seine |Hayligen geyst verleihen das wir bestendig pleyben |in seinem schifflin wide. alle Sturmwind biß ans |endt. Das verleich uns Gott der Vater und der |Sun und der Haylige geyst. |Amen.’ [This ship of apostles is an exemplar |Christian Church, that is being tossed in the stormy |Ocean from place to place, |But the eternal Son of God has mercifully preserved his ship or |Church from the beginning of time until our times. |Against all false teachers und persecutors of Christians God has sent us his Holy Spirit such that we may stay the course on his wide ship until the |End of time. That be conferred on us by God the Father, the |Son and the Holy Spirit. |Amen.]

² Inscribed in brown ink in upper margin: ‘Die heilige Triveltigkeit/ hat beide Testament bereit/ Allen menschen darnach zu leben/ Die Ketzer thun darwider streben/ Durch Ir vernunft un[d] mensche[n] lehr/ Suchen sie Rhu[h]m nicht Gottes ehr’. The poem runs as follows: The holy trinity/ provided both testaments/ for all humans to live by them/ the heretics are opposing this/ by their reasoning and human teaching/ aiming for their own glory but not for God’s honour.

³ For this picture, see Vetter (1969: 18, fig. 12).

Other people depicted as rowers stand in the service of the church of the word: The office of preaching (*status ecclesiasticus*) begins with Augustine and ends in the present age with Luther and Melancthon. The series of political office holders (*status politicus*) starts with emperor Constantine and again ends with contemporary princes, who remain unnamed and who 'have helped the vessel chivalrously against persecutors and false doctrine [*Schifflin ritterlich beygestanden gegen alle Verfolger und falsche Lehr*]'.⁴

The church manifests itself in these three estates—in which the *status oeconomicus* appears as recipient of the word and sacraments—i.e., in society, not beyond it in a sacred sphere. Therefore, all three estates constitute the crew of a Lutheran ship of church, principally all equal and each in its own function committed to the public good. Zündt's picture presents the role of the princes as assisting against persecutors and false teachers. This was a contested reading: Criticism of the government by the clergy versus the criticism of *rabies theologorum*, the theological frenzy, by councillors and princes. By considering the fate of Magdeburg in the Schmalkaldic War, Kaufmann (2009: 694f.) argued: 'The fact that Magdeburg has become a well known symbol of evangelical freedom of belief is in particular down to its theologians, that the town came through its adventure of resistance relatively unharmed, except for some penalty payments, is mainly down to its politicians'.

The Lutheran ship of church gains its contours from its demarcation to the outside: On its voyage through stormy seas, it is threatened by persecutors from the times of the Old Testament (Antiochus IV) until today ('der Thürck [the Turk]') and by false teachers from the time of Arius until 'Machomet [Mohammed]'. However, an existential threat seems no longer to exist. The apocalyptic threat remains but an escalation of the struggle is absent. The Babylonian whore (Acts 17), an image often used to represent the pope as the Antichrist during the time of confessional struggle, is still shown yet only raising a broken sword.

The awareness of confessional security—the Peace of Augsburg with its precept of non-violence in matters of 'contested religion' had existed for 15 years—is again summarized in a panel below the picture, situated midway between the adversaries: 'Gott wird sein Schifflin bis ans Ende erhalten ... [God will preserve his vessel to the end ...]'—such as he did with the vessel of the disciples in the storm on the lake (Matt. 8). This takes up and reinforces the message of the scenes on the top left (the preservation of three young men in a blazing furnace, Dan. 3) and top right (the conversion of Saul, the persecutor of Christians, Acts 9).

The picture can also be read as a Lutheran *Bekenntnisbild* (instructive image of the faith):

A characteristic feature of this type of picture is, first, that its instructive intentions come at the cost of artistic design. The plethora of biblical references prevents the picture from developing a visual effect and impedes the 'power of the image' (Hans Belting 1993). It is no longer possible to pray before such a picture. Here, the disenchantment of the medieval religious world becomes obvious in all its ambivalence. Second, it stands out that the choice of subjects and people is a rather limited one. An offer of rich heroic stories, symbols, saints, members of religious orders, the pope and others is absent. In this way, the picture seems focused yet sparse.

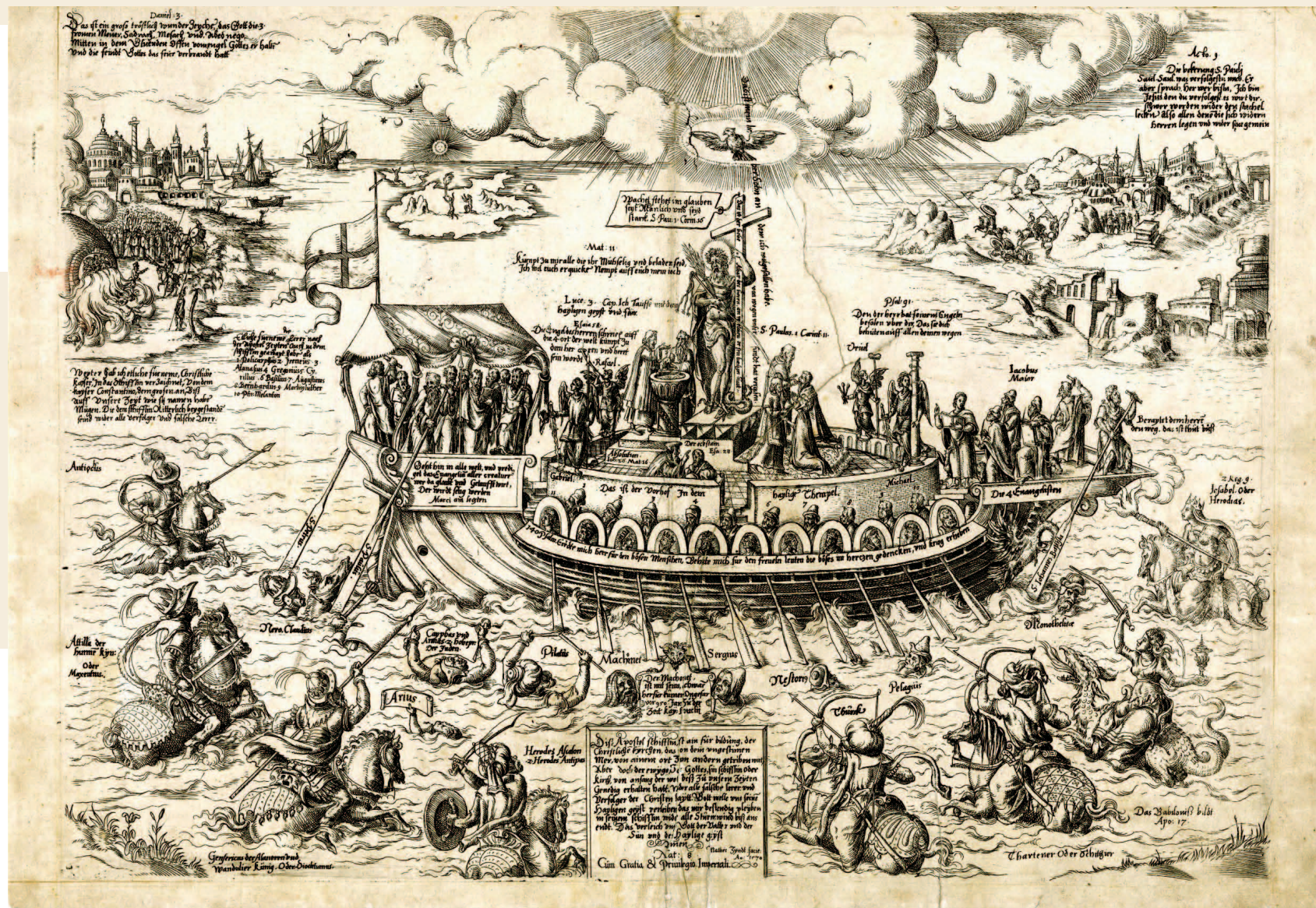
A third feature of this type of picture can be found in its harsh *antithetical character*: here the small handful of Christians, there the mighty horde of their pursuers. This apocalyptic interpretation is likely related to the traumatic experience of imperial religious policy and the defeat of Charles V in the Schmalkaldic War (1546/47) (Kaufmann 2009). Its function is to offer the opportunity to retreat to a doubtlessly 'safe place' and to 'side-line' all that is threatening—externally but also internally. This 'safe place' becomes 'waterproof' through biblical reference and made Protestantism robust—this was more than the respectable and quiet life in the context of a 'Christian patriarchy', as Troeltsch (1906: 333) argued—but from a psycho-historical perspective also prone to melancholy and fraught with aggression issues.⁵

⁴ For the Lutheran territories, Philip Hahn et al. (2011) provide instructive analyses on the relationship between theologians (in their *status ecclesiasticus*) and their political authorities (*status politicus*).

⁵ For a psycho-historical take on religiosity as a way to cope with traumatic experiences, see Winter (2012) and Behringer (2003).

1570(?). 'The Apostels' little ship ...' Matthias Zündt

1570(?), Matthias Zündt
(1498–1586), *Diss
Apostel Schifflin ...* (The
Apostels' little ship ...),
Nuremberg, an etching
(British Museum).



1570-1577. 'The Christian Ship... .' Hans Weigel the Elder

In this woodcut from the British Museum (No. 1880, 0710.597; 61.7 x 105 cm) Hans Weigel the Elder (? ca. 1520–? 1577) takes up Matthias Zündt's (Nuremberg 1498?–Nuremberg? 1586?) 1570 picture, but in a more three-dimensional manner. It continues the Protestant avenue to a German-language alphabet book of biblical images. Its full title: *Das Christliche Schiff, mit seinen mancherley Anstößen* [*The Christian ship with its various impulses*]. For an interpretation, one can draw on Zündt's picture (p. 34 f.). Timewise, we are in the period of the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France (1572). Hans Weigel the Elder was a German form cutter, engraver, printer, letter painter and publisher working in Nuremberg. The woodcut was made between 1570 and 1577, but cannot be dated exactly.



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

As shown at the start of the interpretation of Zündt's picture on page 34, Zündt draws perhaps directly or indirectly on a Catholic Italian depiction of the church but amends this image in a Protestant vein. The original Italian etching was lost but can be reconstructed (according to Vetter 1972).

On deck, we again see Christ with the cross, at his side the two Protestant sacraments (baptism and communion) and four angels with the tools of suffering. Fore and aft, the apostles, evangelists and John the Baptist as helmsman at the very front of the bow. The rowers are all the Christian emperors since the time of Constantine; in this regard, the image also points to a ship of state that serves the church.

Enemies floating in the water are: Nero/Claudius, Arius, Machomet [Mohammed], Sergius, Nestorius, Pelagius and Monoteletes. In a circle around the ship, a number of riders attack: Antiochus/Maxentius, Attila, Geiseric, Herod, the Turk Tartar, the whore of Babylon and Jezebel. In the background at the left, we see the blazing furnace with the three young men; at the right, one can recognize the city of Damascus (the conversion of Saul/Paul), in front some ruins. Like Mathias Zündt's depiction, the image is crammed with biblical quotes. The characters in the picture are all labelled in German.

The ten columns of text underneath the picture describe the martyrdom and persecution of Christians—in difference to the old religion, this is not done on the picture itself. Calling to resist persecution, the text underneath Weigel's etching points, however, also to the then existing importance of old-religious teachers and persecutors of the church: Christ can break the will of tyrants, so that their persecution cannot 'hamper his church [seine kirch nit können dämpfen]'. He *still* proves this *today*, since he turns out to be the insurmountable ruler of 'fanatics and divisive spirits [Schwermern (= Schwärmer) und Rottengeistern]'. In Protestant mass publications, the terms fanatics and divisive spirits referred to internal opponents within the Lutheran territories and cities, which consolidated towards the end of the 16th century. They are already described and damned in the *Augsburg Confession* (CA) of 1530, and again in the *Formula of Concord* (FC) of 1577 (published in the *Book of Concord* in 1580), i.e. in the time in which both etchings originate. The FC presented the disputes among Lutheran theologians since Luther's death as a matter of the past; it also named heretics and traced them back to those renegades (the usual suspects, if you like) already condemned by the old church (FC Solida Declaratio XII, Epitome VIII).¹

With regard to the then acute threat to confessional uniformity, the multitude of heretics and persecutors in the water can in part be linked to these threatening groups. The usual opponents were 'papists', Turks and Jews. But now the fight is mainly against 'close strangers', that is individualistic 'fanatics and divisive spirits' (Kaufmann 2003). In Kaufmann, we also find considerations about the unstoppable religious-theological pluralization within the system of the Lutheran confessional state since the late 1540s and the

¹ The *Formula of Concord—formula concordiae*—is characterized as 'a thorough, clear, correct and final repetition and explanation of certain articles of the Augsburg Confession on which controversy has arisen for a time among certain theologians adhering to this confession, resolved and settled according to the direction of God's word and the summary formulation of our Christian teaching' (Kolb and Wengert 2000: 486). The FC consists of three parts: the Preface with the signature of many but not all Protestant estates of the Empire (e.g., Nuremberg never signed), the Epitome ('Summary of the contested articles') and the *Solida Declaratio* ('A thorough, clear, correct and final repetition and explanation ...'). For the inner-Protestant contestation of 'leftist' freethinkers of the Reformation, cf. Seebaß (1997).

gradual loss of control by the old religion. In the centre, we find Mohammed (Mekka ca. 570–Medina 632) and Sergius (who lived around the year 600), who together hold a sheet of paper in their hands illustrated with a devil's face (only in Zündt), indicating the double threat that existed for 950 years. On the one hand, the threat arises from heresy, since Sergius, Mohammed's teacher, was seen as an Arian or Nestorian monk by the Protestants. In this case, Mohammed's rejection of Christ as the Son of God rests ultimately in the thoughts of a Christian heretic. On the other hand, the threat arises from Turkish military aggression (Kaufmann 2008).

Far left: With regard to Claudius (Lugdunum [Lyon], Gaul 10 BC–? 54 AD poisoned) and Nero (Antium 37–near Rome 68 suicide), it is noteworthy that they are depicted without any contemporary equivalent. One can read this fact as an expression of (Nuremberg) political pragmatism (Hamm 2011), which is not interested in any theological escalation. Even the worldly defenders of the church, located in the ship, are not explicitly named, except for Constantine; although perhaps one of the 'emperors' on board is said to represent Frederick the Wise of Saxony, the protector of Martin Luther (Frederick III; Castle Hartenfels/Torgau, Northern Saxony 1463–Lochau 1525, on Lake Constance, then and now Austria).

Next to them, Arius (? ca. 260–Konstantinopel 336), the heretic, and Genseric (? ca. 389–Carthage 477), King of the Vandals and Alans, the Arian (heretic) persecutor of the truly faithful or, less likely,² Diocletian (Solin, Kroatia 236/245–Split, Kroatia 312) as Roman (pagan) persecutor: Condemned in FC, SD XII, the 'new Arians' (Unitarians, anti-Trinitarians) are also present.

Annas (Jewish high priest; ? 6–? 15) and Caiaphas (Jewish high priest; ? 18–? 36) with Herod Ascalon, that is Herod the Great (Idumea, South of Judea 73 BC–Jericho 4 AD), and Herod Antipas (Lugdunum [Lyon], Gaul 20 BC–39 AD in exile): 'At present' the notorious Jewish hostility towards Christ and Christians seems to be dangerous. It endangers the eternal but also temporal life (danger of revolt) of the *corpus christianum*. For that reason, Protestant theologians often demand a tightening of anti-Jewish policy, such as the expulsion of Jews from a territory (Kaufmann, 2000).

To the right of Mohammed: Pelagius (England ca. 350–? 420), Nestorius (Germanicia, now Turkey ca. 381–ca. 451 Upper Egypt), the Monotheletists (7th century; Christ has two natures, but one will—which was proclaimed a heresy at the Third Council of Konstantinopel in 680). The heretic doctrines of all these teachers experience a renaissance with the 'Anabaptists' (FC, SD XII), who like Pelagius embrace the *propria iustitia* and hence deny, like Nestorius, the role of Christ as the sole mediator of salvation.

The followers of the old religion, however, also spread Pelagian heresy by dint of their 'works righteousness'. This is indicated by the 'Babylonian woman', which in Protestant polemical imagery is often used against the pope and 'papists'. Furthermore, Jezebel and Herod 'still' endanger the homogeneity of the *corpus christianum*, of Christendom. Both threaten the pious with their heretic teachings and violence, just as 'today' the fanatics seduce the pious with their false doctrine, incite them to rebel and harm them in this way—such a point of view conveys the Nuremberg town clerk Lazarus Spengler in a report about the handling of the 'Anabaptists' in Nuremberg (1536?). In such situations, the authorities must be prepared to do their duty (Schmid 1972).

² According to the legend found under the image, both interpretations—Genseric or Diocletian—are possible, but a Genseric reading matches better the context of the New Arians.

The illustration depicts the biblical story of the Flood. In the center, Noah's Ark is shown as a large wooden building with a ramp, where animals and people are gathered. The ark is surrounded by a sea of monsters and soldiers. The sky is filled with clouds and a rainbow. The illustration is surrounded by numerous text blocks in German, including biblical verses and commentary. The scene is set against a backdrop of a city and a landscape with mountains and trees.

Text blocks visible in the illustration:

- Top left:** A small text block with a decorative border.
- Top center:** A large text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Top right:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Middle left:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Middle center:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Middle right:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Bottom left:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Bottom center:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.
- Bottom right:** A text block with a decorative border, containing a biblical verse.

1575. 'The Ship of State.' Daniel Frese

The picture *Das Staatsschiff* (171.5 left, 166 right x 232 cm) from northern Germany painted by Daniel Frese (Melburg near Dithmarschen, now Schleswig-Holstein 1540–Lüneburg, now Lower Saxony 1611) canonizes the new religion in one tableau and concomitantly defines it in a space linked to secular rule, the council room of a town hall. In other words, we might here talk about the reunion of the ship of state and the ship of church on the west wall of the great council hall of Lüneburg. A description of this image can, among others, be found in Maïke Haupt (2000: 143-5). Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger referred us to this image.



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

Ernest, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg (Ülzen, now Lower Saxony 1497–? 1576), Prince of Lüneburg from 1521 to 1546, introduced the Reformation in his territories 'from above' between 1527 and 1530. Initially, the city council of Lüneburg resisted this attempt strongly due to its close economic relations with the Michaelis monastery (salt rights) and urge to assert the city's freedom vis-à-vis the territorial ruler (for details, see Lohse 1980). Lüneburg, then the largest town in the Duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, portrayed itself and Protestantism as global players: Those who row are the 'Romerer [Romans]', 'Greken [Greeks]', 'Persons [Persians]' and 'Assiren [Assyrians]'; they are identified by their respective coat of arms between the blades according to the prophecy of king Daniel. They are also each linked to a cardinal virtue: *temperantia*, *fortitudo*, *ivstitia* and *prudentia*, as indicated on the blades.

God the father (top right across the bow) hands the sword to Janus; behind Janus, we can detect Moses with the tablets of the law in front of him; beside him, David plays his harp; in the centre underneath a dove, the two ladies Pax and Concordia embrace and kiss intensely. The mast is Daniel's tree with birds in its treetop. On the left, we find Peter and Paul as 'confirmators' and Christ as the helmsman, who passes an apple to the ruler; the latter sits on a green ball (these are among other invocations of sayings like 'and kings will take care of you'; 'give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's'.) ... At the rear, one can see a flag that depicts a crane holding a stone in its claw (inscription: 'Guard be alert [Wacht hab acht]').

At the bow of the vessel, four virtues are named: obedience, honour, loyalty and 'fredsa' (decency, peaceableness?). In front of the bow, the four vices float in the water: hatred, greed, wrath and pride. At the rear, a nameless, decapitated head can be seen floating in the water.

Bible quotes can be found everywhere: where 'a wise and sensible authority exists, order ensues ...'. This caption articulates the self-image of the Protestant town council. Here, knowledge of the Ten Commandments is necessary (Janus as gatekeeper and Moses) but also of ancient bodies of knowledge (the wisdom of the ancients, i.e. the Greeks, etc.); after all, according to Paul, even the heathens carried God's law already in their conscience. And there are also the virtues—in a city especially *concordia*, i.e. harmony, and *pax*, i.e. peace; both therefore depicted at the centre, in the middle of the ship. Finally, there is the distinction between the worldly and spiritual: Vis-à-vis Moses, we can detect Christ with the emperor, following Matt. 22:21: 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, ...'. For Luther and Lutheranism, this is the key biblical justification for the theory of the 'two kingdoms'; here, it probably not only refers to the emperor but also to the political order in Lüneburg, namely as a reminder to both its citizens (obedience to the authorities, no riots. See the figure on the bottom left in the water, citing Matt. 26: 52: 'For all who draw the sword ...') and its authorities: on the globe (?) Rom. 2 is quoted (everyone has to oblige to the law, regardless of his rank). If no distinction is made, then this is the result of *odium*, etc. (the open book of a figure in the water indicates heresy); this has become manifest in the papacy but has also to be overcome (the figure of a pope on the bottom right quotes Ps. 20:8: 'They will fall down, but we will stand firm').

Similar to the other Protestant depictions of the ship of church by Zündt and Weigel, the image seems to be of an instructive nature: the city's political order is 'all right', since it rests on an indestructible foundation, the bible and antiquity. This is the only German image we could find that refers directly to the 'country

level', i.e. the level at which the unity of state and church and a corresponding religious homogeneity still existed given the Reformation and the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*, i.e. whose realm, his religion.

In this way, the image addressed the political authorities, which deliberated in the great council room, and did not directly aim at the new church. In contrast to the Lutheran ships of church, it did therefore not display a variety of laypeople. In the 16th century, it was hardly common to assume that laypeople, i.e. citizens, could demand more; the great dispute about these matters began rather in the 18th century. As the only layman, only the emperor is present qua office, to be shown the limits of his power by Christ ('Christus Remiger'; Christ, the oarsman, the helmsman), who is the actual rower, steersman of the ship ('so give back to Caesar what is Caesar's ...').

1575. 'The Ship of State.' Daniel Frese

1575, Daniel Frese (1540–1611), *Das Staats-schiff* (The Ship of State), an oil painting in the town hall of Lüneburg, located in the Great Council Hall.



1575-1600. 'The Militant Ship of the Catholic Church.' Pieter van der Borch I

The first 'Catholic polemical image': This engraving from the Rijksprentenkabinet of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, *Het schip van de strijdbare katholieke kerk* [Navis Ecclesiae militantis—*The Militant Ship of the Catholic Church*] (RP-P-OB-6652; 27.2 x 19.4 cm), was produced by Pieter van der Borch I (? 1545–? 1608), who worked in Antwerp and Malines, and printed by Adriaen Huybrechts I (? 1573–? 1614) from Flanders. The engraving originates in the southern Netherlands. The Rijksmuseum dates the picture between 1560 and 1608.



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

Ewald Maria Vetter (1969: 20, *ad* fig. 14 at p. 21; cf. also *idem* 1972: 146f.) offers a detailed description: 'Despite the harsh situation of the vessel, whose defence is organized by secular clergy, religious clergy and laity, there is no doubt about the outcome of the fight, because the saviour with the *arma* [weapons] surrounded by the apostles, is on the main top, while Maria with an entourage of holy virgins stands on the foretop below, both vouching for victory. The text at the bottom of the picture refers specifically to the influence of Christ. "Caro" [meat], "mundus" [the world], "diabolus" [the devil] and "falsa doctrina" [false teachings] threaten the ship like adverse winds and agitate the 'undae aduersitatis' [the waves of hostility; behind the ship, on the right] against it, which a priest seeks to smooth with oil. Doom looms also from the shore by the "turba tyran(orum)" [the tyrannical bunch; far left on the bottom], and by the "plebs seducta" [the seduced people lead astray; far right on the top], equipped with firearms, halberds and lances. Two boats prepare to attack, the "nauis falsi dogmatis" [the ship of false teachings; on the left], and the "nauis haereticorum" [the ship of heretics; on the right], steered by the devil himself; with a grappling hook, a further spirit of hell tries to enable the heretics to penetrate the flock of defenders. A bishop tackles him forcefully with a rod, intend to avert the danger and to sink the boat.'

The ship of church, whose helm, the *clauus constantiae* [the nail of reliability (= the cross), or clavis = the key], is manned by the pope and whose anchor, the *anchora fidei* [the anchor of faith] is operated by a cardinal, carries the *malus crucis* [the mast of the cross; centre], as mast. The latter is used by the *zelus Catholicorum* [the flock of Catholic emulators], in the form of a Jesuit, to reach the heavenly sphere with the help of a rope ladder. Here, the sail of the *cura superiorum* [the providence of the superiors] is attached and unfolded by a bishop. In the background, crowds of monks and laypeople stand ready for action, while the *verbum dei* [the word of God] is announced with a sound of trombones from the mast. Two cannons, "oratio" [oration] operated by a monk and assisted by a Jesuit, and "auxilium plebis" [aid by the crowd] under the supervision of a layman, are brought to bear on the attackers. Among this upheaval, four representatives of mendicant orders do their service on the rowing benches, unaffected by the hurly-burly and noise of war around them: *remigium quatuor mendicatum* [the oar of the four mendicant orders]. The certainty to reach the goal encourages them in their deeds. [All inserted translations are ours.]

The function attributed to the monks as crew of the *navis ecclesiae* in some of the images mentioned so far is reminiscent of the application of the metaphor of the vessel to religious communities in various literary and visual depictions (cf. pp. 32f. [in the same article of Vetter]). However, the ship of church includes various orders and allows them to be active according to their domain. ...'. [What follows are references to past depictions of these orders in the French world.]

What is noteworthy here? The (Calvinist) State, in which the Catholics in the Netherlands have become an excluded minority concentrated in the South, is not present at all; it only vaguely appears as *turba tyran(norum)* [tyrannical bunch] in the bottom left of the picture, i.e. as a threat. While being previously marginalized in the Catholic ships, the laypeople are now themselves an important pillar of defence.

As a Protestant polemical counter-image from this very period, we add: unknown artist, *Das Schiff der päpstlichen Kirche* [The Ship of the Papal Church] (Munich, Graphische Sammlung 21.5 x 39 cm; inv. no.

9347 Z), created in the second half of the 16th century. For a description, see Scribner (1981: 112f., *ad* fig. 86). The ship sets sail and sets to sea. The ship's hull looks like a disembowelled locust lying on its back—which is perhaps a reference to the biblical plagues (Exod. 7-12). Amidships, its six feet carry the church, in which the church steeple figures as mast. The structures at the head of the locust are transformed into a rudder, with which the pope steers the ship; seven pairs of clerics move the vessel as oarsmen. The oars hang in tooth-packed wells so that the ship looks like a monster with many jaws. The pope is meant to stand in the mouth of hell. Winged devils help with the movement of the vessel by dint of a blower, bellows and a trumpet. The ship was also intended to criticize Catholic practice: The church bears the papal coat of arms, and three saints, 'idols', sit on it. Through the stained-glass windows, votive tablets can be seen, which indicates that it is a 'collecting pilgrims' church. In the bow of the ship, one can see a procession with monstrance and host. A nun stays behind on the shore holding bundled Catholic devotional objects in a cloth. She carries a baby under her arm—which is perhaps a reference to illicit sexual activity of the clergy. Above, two owls rest on the sail, which is a bad omen that points to the upcoming bad fate of the church.

1575-1600. 'The Militant Ship of the Catholic Church.' Pieter van der Borch I

Click to enlarge image.



1575-1600, Pieter van der Borch I (1545–1608), *Navis Ecclesiae militantis* (The Militant Ship of the Catholic Church; engraving; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; publ. by Adriaen Huybrechts I, etching, Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam). As a Protestant, distinctively polemical counterpart, we present (above): second half of the 16th century, unknown artist, *Das Schiff der päpstlichen Kirche* (The Ship of the Papal Church; etching; Graphische Sammlung, Munich).



1550-1600. Typus Religionis. Unknown German artist

This pen-and-ink drawing in brown (squared with red chalk) comes from the Graphische Sammlung in Munich and is there grouped among ‘the unknown Germans’ of the 16th century (inv. no. 9347 Z; 21.5 x 39 cm). Here, it is called *Das Schiff des christlichen Glaubens* [The ship of the Christian faith]—but it should better be called *Die ecclesia triumphans auf ihrer Fahrt zum portus salutis* [The triumphant church on its voyage to the port of bliss]—and is described by Ewald Maria Vetter (1972: 158f., ad fig. 85; 1969: 22f., ad fig. 16).



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

Vetter presents this image as one link in a long chain of *Typus Religionis* pictures, which probably originates in a lost Italian engraving dating to the first half of the 16th century. A later, second ‘coloured’ version of 1760 entitled *Triumpho de la Fee* [The Triumph of the Faith] ... (see pp. 49 ff.) makes faster and more directly accessible what is visually presented here in the second half of the 16th century. This version will be introduced in the following image description, although it formally belongs no longer into the 16th century.

‘The aforementioned depiction of the *triumphus ecclesiae* [the church’s victory; i.e., Loef’s oil painting dated by Vetter to 1580], must be linked to a design labelled *typus religionis* [the cast of religion], which we know in a number of variants: Imitating an Italian fresco of the second half of the 16th century [i.e., the here presented *typus religionis* image], these are a French and two Spanish pictures from the first quarter of the 17th century [one of which is the *Triumpho de la Fee* ... of 1760 presented below]. The distribution pattern as well as the numerous explanatory references and texts point to a respective copper engraving as template. The key feature of the design was the application of the ship metaphor to various religious orders, which was already known from some literary and biblical passages. Yet, the design did not point to a particular order; it rather offers a general characterization of a peculiar mode of existence, innate to this sort of clergy as a way to get to the *portus salutis* [the port of bliss]’ (Vetter 1972: 158f.).

With regard to the image itself, Vetter (1969: 22) writes: ‘In the picture a handsome three-master sails on the MARE HVIVS SECVLI [the ocean of the current age], leaving behind the shore with all its worldly temptations; it is divided into the areas of SVPERBIA VITAE [arrogant life], the CONCVPISCENTIA CARNIS [carnal lust] and the CONCVPISCENTIA OCVLORVM [lustful gaze]. The vessel’s bow points to the port of eternity, the PORTVS SALVTIS [the harbour of bliss; all our translations]. In the realm of earthly passions, the proud climb impassable cliffs seeking the higher offices of hierarchy: the mitre of the abbot and bishop; the cardinal’s hat and the tiara and the worldly honours of army commander and royal crown. ...’

The vessel is manned with a traditional crew: saints, the pope at the helm, bishops and members of religious orders—just as we have already seen in earlier pictures. Five groups are out there on the sea:

- On the left, one can see a boat full of devilish creatures attacking the vessel.
- On the right next to it, there is a sea monster (Leviathan?) that devours people.
- Further to the right, we see a boat steered by an angel, whose passengers climb into the vessel with the help of people already aboard the ship of church. One of them throws a box (with earthly goods?) into the sea.
- Further to the right is yet another attacking boat.
- On the far right, we find yet another boat with people who are pulled on board with the help of ropes. A king (crown) and a prince (princely crown) sit in the back of the boat eager to board the ship as well.
- This drawing points also to Catholicism’s sacredness of the church, which offers refuge from a dangerous world. But this point is made in a confident, calm yet not threatening manner.

1550-1600. Typus Religionis. Unknown German artist

1550-1600, unknown German artist, Typus Religionis. Pen-and-ink Drawing after an Italian mural (Graphische Sammlung, Munich).



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Ca. 1760 in Spain. Typus Religionis: 'Triumph of Faith and of the Law of the Catholic Church.' Artist unknown

This etching *Triumpho de la Fee y de la Lay y de la Iglesia Catolica* of an unknown, probably Spanish, artist is located in the Civila Raccolta delle Stampe Bertarelli in Milan (inv. no. P.S. g 2-36; 73.3 x 53.5 cm); we thank the Amici Bartarelli, especially Mauro Alberti and A.L.B. Ciacchi at the University of Groningen, for their help and Fabio Saporetti for the new photography. A description of the picture can be found in Ewald Maria Vetter (1972: 148-54, *ad* table, fig. 82; 1969: 222f., *ad* fig. 15 at p. 23) and shows significant parallels to the discussion of the 'unknown German' above. The picture unfolds the (over-)full counter-programme to the Reformation in a clearly accessible manner.



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This second *Typus Religionis* image is probably one of the latest copies of a lost Italian etching of the first half of the 16th century (for its genealogy, see Vetter 1972: 148f.). We already described the latter as a copied mural of the 16th century in the analysis of the first *Typus Religionis* image (pp. 46 f.). Matthias Zündt (ca. 1570), Hans Weigel the Elder and then Jacob Gerritz Loef (1640-50 or 1580) drew on it, be it in a reformational or counter-reformational vein.

On the top left, we find a monstrance in the shape of a sun, which radiates lightning or flickering flames. On the left and right a coat of arms: the papal one of Clement III (pope from 1187-1191) and probably the Spanish one. Vetter (1972: 149-53) offers a detailed description: 'The inscription on the banner of Christ's ferula explains that he crosses the seas of the world on the ship of the church as the "Rex Regnum (sic!) et Dominus Dominatum" [the king of the Kingdoms and the ruler of the Dominions]. HE is announced by the evangelists, of whom is said: IN OMNEM TERRAM exiuit SONUS eorum ... [their calling spreads across the globe]. The text points to the special role of Mary in this voyage: DEI GENITRICIS FIDISSIMA DUCE [lead by the most pious mother of God]. The mast is described as FIDES XPTI ARBOR [the tree of faith (in Christ)], and the ropes are equated with the special bond that emerges in a religious community. This equation becomes manifest in the FUNDATORES RELIGIONUM [founders of the religion] gathered around the mast; all of them hold ropes, each of which is interpreted in a particular way. Francis: "vigilie matutinate (sic!)" [vigils until dawn]; Benedict: "fructifere predicationes" [fruitful sermons]; Augustine: "conversiones peccantium" [conversions of the sinners]; Albertus: "continue discipline" [continuous instructions]; Bruno: "devote meditatione" [pious meditations] and Dominic: "perserverate abstinencie" [continuous chastity]. These partly surprising attributions are the result of some arbitrary changes, indicated by the congruence between the Spanish painting and the engraving of 1602. The depicted attributes characterize the respective persons: The conversion of sinners is, for instance, the task of Saint Dominic, and Saint Bruno takes care of the VIGILIE MATVTINALES [vigils until dawn]¹.

Singled out from the DISCIPULI XPTI FUNDATES LEGIBUS [Christ's disciples, who laid the foundations with laws] at the top of the rear, Peter handles the helm by virtue of the promise on the ship's flag: "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram edificabo Ecclesiam meam ..." (You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church; Matt. 16:18f.). The rowers represent the four Latin Doctors of the Church—SCRIPTURA REMIS DOCTORES AEQUORA SULCANT [with the help of the scriptures the scholars are rowing through the ocean]—who are accompanied by Thomas Aquinas. Their rudders carry the names of scriptures of the old and new covenant: "Quinque libri Moysis, Epistole Pauli, Libri Salomonis, Evangelia, Duo-decim Prophete" [the five books of Moses, the letters of Paul, the books of Salomo, the gospels, the twelve Prophets]; the actual connection between them and these scriptures remains however unclear. The fighters above and at the bow incapacitate the attackers in their two barges with all kinds of military equipment, so that the optimistic

¹ Vetter's comment in his footnotes reads: 'The "result yielding" sermons characterize Albert the Great, the PERSERVANTES ABSTINENTIAE [continuous chastity] of Augustine, the pious reflections of Francis and the CONTINVATAE DISCIPLINE [continuous instructions] of St Benedict'.

inscription at the bow seems justified: "Solvite Corde metum cunctis dominabimur istis" [let's oust the fear from our Hearts and we will rule them all]. Anthony of Padua, Anthony the Hermit and St. Basil, Francis of Paola and Bernard of Clairvaux are united in the struggle. The other group includes St. Petrus Coelestin, the Blessed Filippo S. di St. Maria and the Capuchin Matthew of Bassi as well as the Saints John of Gualbertus, Romuald and Wilhelm.² Their actions cannot easily be squared with the explanations CLAMENTES (sic!) JACIUNT DIVINI SEMINA VERBI ... [in shouting they distribute the seeds of God's word]. The presence of the Archangel Michael guarantees the ship, which has to be interpreted metaphorically, heavenly assistance in its position of threat. This "navis mystice contemplationis" [the ship of mystical contemplation] carries both "bona voluntas" [good will] as its anchor and the "desiderium paradisi" [longing for paradise]. The fact that no Jesuit joins the defence is due to the picture's date of origin—which probably falls just into the first years of the newly established order. The use of its coat of arms on the shield of the Archangel in this engraving and in the image in Daroca compensates this lack and marks the emergence of the order as a special intervention of God into the fate of the church.

The attacking boats are the NAVIS (sic!) HAERETICORUM (sic!) [the ships of the heretics] and the NAVIS SCISMATICORUM [the ships of schismatics, of false teachings, of the destroyers of unity]. On one, the inscription comments the depiction: "Herectici jaculis immania terga resolvunt" [the abominable heretics are routed with spears], on the other: "Hi sunt scismatici Sermonum vulnera passi" [the principals of schism suffer the wounds of their own preaching]. NESTROIO, ARIIO, PELAGIO, LUTHERO and CALVINO already suffered their fate; they float in the sea, like Sabellius, Photius, Donatus and some other nameless heretics. One of those struggling in the waves carries the caption: "Niteris in cassum Nave subvertere Petro Fluctuat haud mundi desinet esse caput" [in vain you'll boast that you have destroyed Peter's ship. It cannot be rocked und will unfailingly be the crown of the world]. The ever-present and successfully overcome threat of persecution is represented by the boats moored alongside the ship of church carrying imprisoned and named opponents: Jews, Roman emperors and rulers hostile towards the church.³ As explanation to the boats steered by Daniel, Ezekiel and Ezekias,⁴ further texts are added: "Ecce volente Deo duri sternentur Hebrei" [behold, it's by God's will, that the Hebrews are thrown to the earth]; "Induperadores (sic!) victi subiere triumphum (sic!)" [the vanquished rulers must endure the triumph]; "Ducuntur Reges manibus post terga revinctis" [the kings are lead away with their hands tied to their backs]. In the foreground, the governors who persecuted Christianity on behalf of Roman emperors lie dead on the ground. "Poncio Pilato, y otros Prefectos, que por mandamienta de los Emparadores magtaron los christianos mueren miserablenens" [Pontius Pilate and the other prefects, at the command of the emperors, made the Christians die miserably]. Next to them, the ruins of the Pantheon with the shattered statues of Hercules and Apolo (sic!) indicate the victory of Christianity over paganism.

Each pointing to the central main picture from a particular perspective, four secondary scenes depict the salvation of the three young men, who refused to worship the "Estatua de Nebucodonosor" [the statue of Nebuchadnezzar; king of Babylon, 6th century], the duel between the Emperor Heraclius and the Persian king Khosrau, the conversion of Saul near Damascus and the Christians marching into Constantinople with the pope at their top. The Daniel quote ("Ecce enim Deus noster potest eripere nos ...")⁵ [Behold, our God can save us] on the furnace and the angel dividing the flames clearly indicate that God grants support and help to believers; those fighting in the face of their followers—some killing the enemies of the emperor

² Vetter explains their significance in a footnote: 'These are the founders of following orders and religious communities: Celestines, Oratorians, Capuchins, Camaldolese and Williamites'.

³ Vetter's comment in his footnotes reads: 'The labelling of one boat: LOS REYOS DE LA S. INGLESIA en la carcel misinterprets the situation; on the Roman engraving the note LI RE PREGIONI DELLA S. CHIESA [The kings as prisoners of the holy Church] points to the fact that the HEBREI PRIGIONI Hebrews as prisoners (of the Church)] and the IMPERATORI PRIGIONI [rulers as prisoners (of the Church)] are in church custody'.

⁴ Vetter's comment in his footnotes reads: 'The latter is an erroneous information; in the engraving and the image in Daroca, Jeremia steers the boat'. [The related painting in Daroca can be found in Llompert (1970: 312) as fig. 10.]

⁵ Vetter's comment in his footnotes reads: 'de camino ignis ardentis et statuam quam erexisti non adoremus. Dan. 3. (Dan. 3:17 and 18) [from the blazing furnace, and we will not worship the statue that you have built]; the Roman copperplate engraving quotes word-by-word those verses condensed here'.

**[Ca. 1760 in Spain. Typus Religionis:
'Triumph of Faith and of the Law of the Catholic Church'. Artist unknown]**

wear the imperial eagle on their flag—carry the inscription “pro fide certant” [fighting for the faith] and points thereby to the obligation of Christian rulers to fight for the faith. The conversion of Saul pursuing the young church shows another way in which God intervenes in favour of his own, and the baptism of the Turkish inhabitants of the retaken capital of the Byzantine Empire conducted by the pope in the presence of Christian rulers⁶ is an expression of the belief that the “infidels” will finally turn to the church, while the inscription on the wall of the city needs to be read as the promise of a future unity of the church: “Alias oves habeo que non sunt de hoc ovili Joan Cap. 10” [I still have other sheep which are not from this sheep pen]. Both, the “Prophetia beati Cirilli” [prophecy of the blessed Kyrillos], indicated by the two armies of horsemen in the clouds, of which one flees with the crescent on their flag from Christian fighters equipped with the banner of the cross, and the note “El Abad Joachimo prophetiza la victoria a la Santa Iglesia y a los Christianos” [the abbot Joachim has prophesied the victory of the Holy Church and the Christians] above a church, which towers beside the many-headed dragon Behemoth—“Stringit caudam suam quasi cedrum” ([he will reach out with his tail like a cedar]; Job 40)—anticipates the voyage of the “Navis Ecclesiae” [the ship of church] through temporality facing difficulties yet striving unwaveringly to its ultimate aim. The inscription at the top reads: TRIUMPHO DE LA FEE Y DE LA LEY CATHOLICA CERTIFICADA PRO SUS QUATRO EUANGELISTAS Y SUS APOSTELES Y SUS PRINCIPALE DOCTORES CONTRA TODA HEREGIAS (sic!) Y SUPERSTICIONES (sic!) DEL PAGANISMO [the triumph of faith and catholic law according to the four evangelists and their apostles und their famous interpreters—against all heresies and superstitions of the heathen]. This proves to be a more detailed formulation of the perhaps original explanation at the bottom edge. The fact that Mielich’s miniature (pp. 31 ff.) shows a ritual in front of a graven image, probably a statue of the god of war, instead of the three young men in the blazing furnace can perhaps be explained with the historical situation before the battle of Lepanto [7 October 1571]. The scene appears therefore as a counter-image to the recapture of Turkish occupied territories alluded to by the depiction of the capture of Constantinople.⁷

An inscription on the pedestal of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar on the 1602 engraving informs about the creator of the composition: Qvesta nave e stat coposta da vn devot.mo religioso la qvale ha intitolata il trionfo di s. chiesa, da molti cobatvta come se qvi si vede [This ship has been created by a devoted, very religious person who has titled it the triumph of the holy church, occurring after much fighting as is seen here]. The emergence in the monastic realm explains why the defence of the vessel rests in the hands of members of religious orders exclusively. While previous examples characterized them as saints, they appear in a corresponding French painting without aureola, and thus as contemporary warriors in the service of the righteous faith. ...’.

If we take Matthias Zündt’s visual programme of 1570 (p. 34 ff., 36) as counter-example, the Spanish picture offers maximum contrast to the Protestant visual reductionism; in a way, it represents visual gluttony. The antithetical character is here reversed: After their victory, the host of Christians rules over their enemies, and the Christians must no longer, as still in Pieter van der Borcht’s picture (pp. 43 ff.), fight many enemies (in the Netherlands) since the last quarter of the 16th century.

The visual programme matches, however, the character of an instructive picture, since the pedagogical clearly defeats the aesthetical, and faith is clearly distinguished from heresy and superstition. One’s own foundation is determined, delineated and backed up with references and citations. According to Vetter’s description of the rudder blades, the four rowing *doctores scripturae* (Doctors, learned teachers of the Church, i.e. its scripture) appear to be the *doctores* [doctors of the Church] of the biblical books; they are represented as exegetes and not as ‘church fathers’, who are as such already equipped with authority. Perhaps this can well be interpreted as a reflex both of the Tridentinum and the new educational claim of Catholic confessionalization. One hardly wants to leave exegetics to the Protestants alone.

⁶ Vetter’s comment in his footnotes reads: ‘The Roman engraving clearly distinguishes the emperor from other rulers’.

⁷ For the enduring effect of the Turkish threat on art in the Catholic Church, cf. Kieser (1997: 199ff., 139ff.).

Ca. 1760 in Spain. Typus Religionis: ‘Triumph of Faith and of the Law of the Catholic Church.’ Artist unknown

Ca. 1760 (Spain), unknown artist, Typus Religionis: *Triumpho de la Fee y de la Ley de la Iglesia Catolica* (The Triumph of Faith and of the Law of the Catholic Church), an etching (Civila Raccolta delle Stampe Bertarelli, Milan).



1580-1590. The Ship of State as Mechanical Galleon and Clock. Hans Schlottheim

This ship automation, made between 1580 and 1590, can be found in the British Museum (no. 1866,10-30,1). Those seemingly untouched by the Reformation play and represent here. To do so, they use the metaphor of the ship of state stripped of any religious importance. Two other similar ships exist, handcrafted by Hans Schlottheim (Naumburg on the Saale 1547–? 1625), an Augsburg watchmaker: one exhibited in the Musée National de la Renaissance in Écouen, another in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (see inner title page). The clock at the British Museum is not quite in its original state but has been restored in line with the two other variants (for a description, see esp. MacGregor (2012: 566-72), on which we draw here; see also Conihout et al. 2001; Thompson 2004).



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

The automaton is a self-propelled table decoration and at the same time a clock and music box, made of gilded copper and iron. The figures on the ship are concomitantly moved by an automatic system. The construction is about one meter tall. It represents a galleon, a typical war and merchant ship of the 16th century with waterproof gun doors above the water line; in a sense, it is the workhorse of and symbol for Europe's global expansion.

In the crow's nests build on top of the masts, sailors equipped with small hammers hit bells to indicate the time. The 16th century stands for the invention of the scaled-down clockwork: Peter Henlein's Nuremberg pocket watch dates to 1504. The time is also displayed at the bottom of the main mast.

The ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, Emperor Rudolph II (Vienna 1552–1612 Prague), sits in state under a canopy with double eagle high up on the aft deck. Under the main mast, emerging out of the depth of the vessel (see the picture on the top left), the seven electors pass the emperor, each paying homage as they receive their fiefs.

Behind the main mast, heralds announce a feast. From the ship's hull, organ music emerges. Eleven out of 16 guns fire shots automatically, and the galleon starts to move on its wheels. This is a technical magic machine that matches the notion of the world as a machine very well.

The ship as a ship of state symbolizes the Holy Roman Empire, a 'multi-branched conglomerate of clerical territories, countless principalities and rich city-states'—quite as complex as the European Union today (Scharpf 1985). It symbolizes the harmony of this entity at a time at which centrifugal force were already at work: its weakening through religious schism; the threat of the Turks; a power shift towards the states at the Atlantic coast, which began to conquer the world. And it stands for the fascination with technical magic machines. Direct religious symbolism is hardly detectable; we are hence confronted with a pure ship of state.

So far, we have only discussed the British Museum version of the ship. On the inner title page, however, we show the more colourful, sail equipped variant from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The Viennese ship carries the following inscription: 'AO 1585 DER DUBELDE (A)DELER BIN (I)CH BNANT (BEI)I ALLEN FVRSTN VN HERREN GANTZ WOL BEKANNT ICH SEHEL SER KREFTIG ES IST KEIN WINT SO MECHTIG DER MICH KAN LETZEN DAS SAEG ICH WARHAFTIG YR SCHIFFERS SEIT GEDACHTIG DAS YR EVCH GEGEN MICH NII THVT SETZEN ES IST KEIN VNWETTER SO GROES DAR ICH MICH AN STOES DAS ICH NIT SOLT KONEN FAREN DER MYR WVNSCHT VYL BOES GEGEN DEN STE ICH BLOES UND WILL MEIN GESCHVTS NIT SPAREN'.¹ (In the year 1585. I am called the double eagle, well known to all princes and rulers. I (am?)

¹ In today's German this would read: Im Jahre 1585. Der doppelte Adler bin ich benannt, bei allen Fürsten und Herren ganz wohl bekannt. Ich (sein? segel?) sehr kräftig. Es ist kein Wind so mächtig, der mich kann verletzen. Das sag ich wahrhaftig: Ihr Schiffer denkt daran, dass Ihr Euch nicht gegen mich setzt. Es ist kein Unwetter so groß, daran ich mich stoß, dass ich nicht fahren könnte. Wer mir wünscht viel Böses, gegen den stehe ich bloß und will mein Geschütz nicht sparen.

sail?) quite strong (forcefully). There is no wind strong enough to hurt me. I say truthfully: You mariners, keep in mind not to turn against me. There is no thunderstorm bad enough that I could hurt myself, that I would not be in full activity. Who wishes me ill, I will turn against, and I will not be miserly with my ordnance.)

The flags at the mast-tips of this Viennese ship (see inner title page) present the double-headed eagle. Sea scenes and groups of Sileni are depicted on the four sails. According to Greek mythology, Sileni are hybrids of men and horse, probably the sons of Silenus and nymphs.

A centrepiece² with similar symbolism, yet with slightly stronger religious connotations, can be found in 1594 as ‘cup in ship shape’, also created in Augsburg but made out of silver (Hoffmann et al 2005: 479f., no. VI.23). It is a gift of the later emperor Ferdinand II to the Hohen Schuel der Jesuiten in Ingolstadt in gratitude for his years of study there. The ship is equipped with the emblems of the Knights of the Golden Fleece. The goldsmith was Caspar Hentz (? 1560–? 1635) from Augsburg. Hoffmann et al. (2005: 481) state: ‘In a broader sense—following heraldic references—the ship can however be read as the ship of state sailing under fortunate, virtuous leadership. In this, the Knights of the Golden Fleece are presented as particularly predestined for this task. In the academic, ecclesiastical sphere of the Jesuits, which Ferdinand’s ship addressed, one could interpret the gift as “a symbol of the state steered by knights of the fleece, whose main tasks were the protection of faith and church” (Zweigler 1998: 115)—an important aspect and claim in an age of confessional struggles.’

Table decorations were quite popular among the upper layers of society in these centuries, however, there is a very particular explanation for these ships: ‘Soon after’ the 13th century, ‘the ship-shaped table centrepiece gained importance in table ceremonials; especially at festive events, it was placed at the left of the ruler and host to identify his place’ (Lehne 1985: 78f.). A particularly important ship-shape centrepiece is the ‘nef’ on the table of the French king (Schmid 2006), e.g., presented at the banquet table after the coronation in Reims.

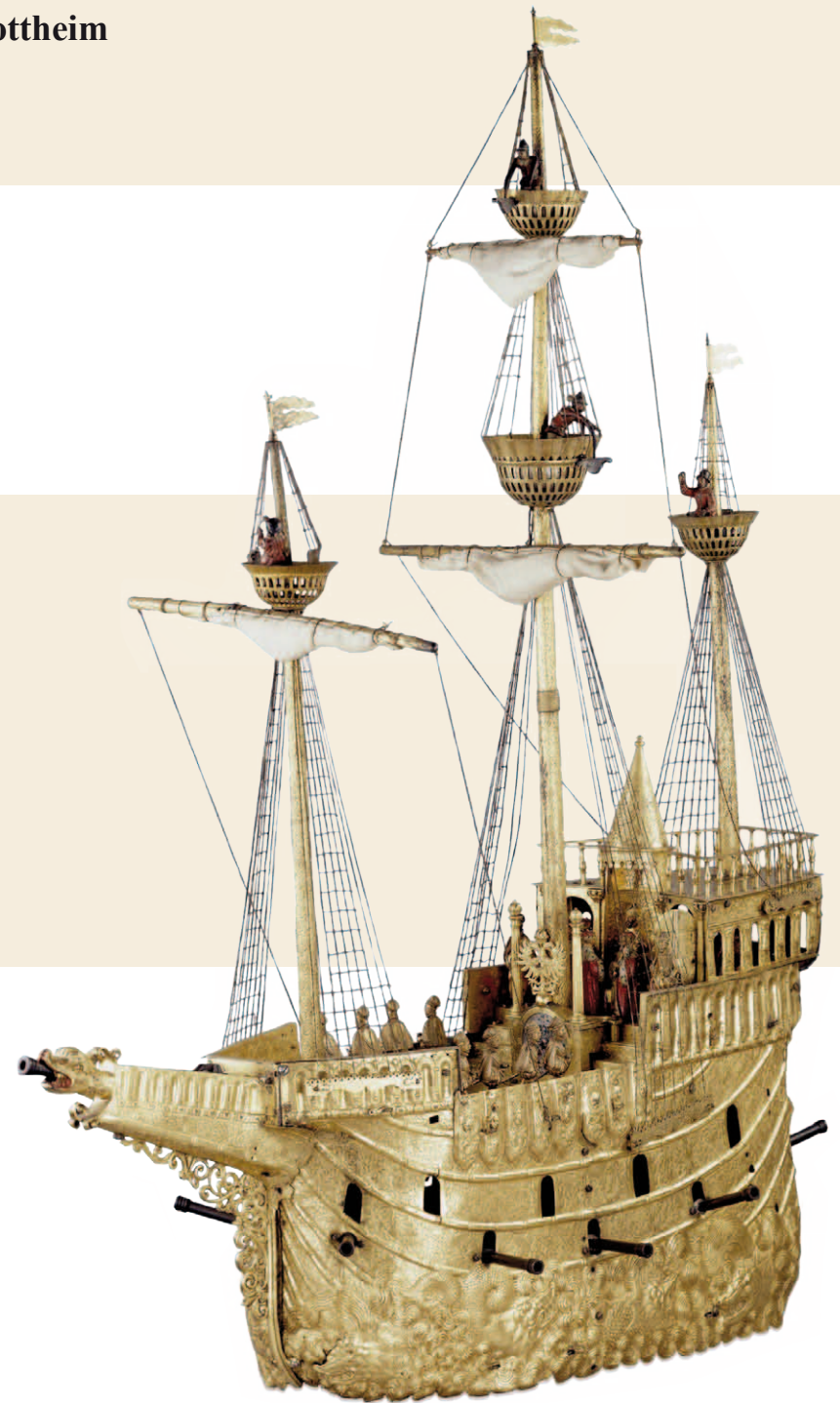
² For the history of ‘nefs’, table ornaments in the shape of ships, see Lehne (1985: 75-97).

1580-1590. The Ship of State as Mechanical Galleon and Clock. Hans Schlottheim

[Click to enlarge image.](#)



1580-1590, Hans Schlottheim (1547–1625),
The Ship of State as Mechanical Galleon and
Clock, Augsburg, a centrepiece (British Mu-
seum).



1580 or 1640-50. The Ship of Church. One of the northern Dutch masters or Jacob Gerritsz Loef

To conclude, we present—in addition to the *Navis Ecclesiae milita(n)tis* (pp. 43 ff.)—the second polemical counter-reformational ship, the second Catholic combative ship in the wider Central European region: It celebrates the victory over the heretics. The oil painting once belonged to the Bisschoppelijk Museum Haarlem and is today part of the collection of the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht (inv. no. BMH s400; 90 x 105 cm without frame). A description of the picture can be found in Bußmann and Schilling (1998: No. 791) and Vetter (1972: 157f., *ad fig.* 84). Vetter (1972: 157) dates this picture to ‘the period around 1580’,



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

attributes it to a Northern Dutch master and refers to it as *The Ship of the Old and New Covenant*. In 1990, the curator of the Museum Catharijneconvent, Paul P.W.M. Dirkse, ascribed it to Jacob Gerritsz Loef (Enkhuizen 1607–1675), dated it to 1640-50 and chose *The Ship of Church* as title (Kootte 2003).

The picture was hence either painted 30 (Vetter) or 90 (Dirkse) years after the onset of the counter-Reformation; as an oil painting, it was unsuitable for broad *propaganda fidei* (promotion of the faith). The picture draws on motives of Protestant visual propaganda, but now also Jan Hus (Husinec, Souther Bohemia 1369–Konstanz 6 July 1415 stake), Martin Luther (Eisleben 1483–*ibid.* 1546), Menno Simons (Witmarsum, Friesland, Netherlands 1496–Wüstenfelde near Bad Oldesloe, now Schleswig-Holstein 1561; Anabaptist in Frisia, founder of the Mennonites) and Jean Calvin (Noyon, Picardie 1509–Geneva 1564) are depicted all floating in the water behind the stern, specifically labelled with their names and shown reading texts and swinging swords. There, the ‘Antekrist’ with sceptre and sword rides a seven-headed monster of the Apocalypse, and the persecutor of Jews, King Antiochus (old testament), fires at the ship with bow and arrow, while he sits on the dragon Leviathan.

About 50 passengers are on board, together with figures of the old testament in the bow and on the foredeck: in the bow, the Cherub with flaming sword expelling Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden; then Moses with stone tablets; David with the harp; on the middle deck, John the Baptist marks the transition from the old to the new testament; next to him, a woman in white with a cross (representing the Catholic church?); and allegorical figures (justice, free will).

With the rear gallery, we arrive in the New Testament and see trombonists and saints (Lawrence with the gridiron) and four fathers of the church (Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory), who peer through open gun ports—rowing rulers are not depicted here! The sails depict some virtues (faith = cross/book; love = two children; hope = anchor and bird); at the spreader the crucified Christ is depicted, his blood flows into a seven-armed candelabrum (= the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, i.e. baptism, confirmation, communion, confession, anointing of the sick, ordination and marriage); aside we probably see Mary; alongside Christ, four differently dressed men (probably members of different monastic orders) climb in the shrouds; in the tops (the first platform attached to the lower mast) the evangelist Matthew in the foremast, Mark in the mainmast and Lucas in the mizzen mast; John can be found still higher up in the crow’s nest depicted with pigeon, the Holy Spirit; about John, the white flag *Arma Christi* (weapons of Christ) flutters on the foremast, while the black one symbolising eternal death after the fall of men (with skull) is attached to the foremast.

Here we see the ship of church as a *counter image* to a ship of—a Calvinist Netherlands—state. The catholics have been set afloat on the sea by a state that rested exclusively on Calvinist foundations (see Troeltsch 2004: 257-60) and repressed all other faiths.

1580 or 1640-50. The Ship of Church. One of the northern Dutch masters or Jacob Gerritsz Loef

1580 or 1640-50, Northern Dutch master or Jacob Gerritsz Loef (1607–1675), *Das Schiff der Kirche* (The Ship of Church), an oil painting (Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht).



1620. 'The Ship of State.' Frans Schillemans

Overall, the vessel painted by the Northern Dutch master or Jacob Gerritsz Loef and presented last (pp. 55 ff.) does not show the quality of a ship of state. Regardless of the year of origin of Loef's painting, the counter-image should be the engraving *Het Ship van Staat* (*The Ship of State*) created 1620 by Frans Schillemans (Middelburg, province of Zeeland 1575–? ?). This Dutch image of state formation amalgamates the Calvinists, under the chairmanship of the theologian Johannes Bogerman (Upleward, East Frisia, now Lower Saxony 1576–Franeker, Frisia, Netherlands 1637), with the new state, including its personnel lead by Maurice of Orange (Dillenburg, now Hesse, Germany 1567–The Hague 1625), and presents the results of the six-month synod of Dordrecht (13 October 1618–9 May 1619). The 'liberal' leader of the opposition, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (Amersfoort 1547–The Hague 13 May 1619) is beheaded shortly thereafter; while his left hand, Hugo Grotius (Delft 1583–Rostock 1645), today widely considered the father of international law (Edwards 1981), began lifelong imprisonment in Loevestein castle; he only escaped with the help of his wife and (in) a book chest.



[Click to enlarge image.](#)

With regard to the historical context: The 80-year war of independence against Spain came to an end, and the Netherlands emancipated herself from the Holy Roman Empire. But this modern state bound itself to the Calvinist Church, just as the medieval Empire had bound itself to the Catholic Church. The conflict that split the synod of Dordrecht broke out in 1604. It put at loggerheads two professors of the University of Leiden and escalated quickly into a nationwide dispute: The disciples of Jacobus Arminius (Oudewater, Province of Utrecht 1560–Leiden 1609; 'Remonstrants') attacked the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, i.e. that God had predetermined eternal damnation or ascension, regardless of individual actions or beliefs. In Contrast, the Arminians led by Oldenbarnevelt, who had negotiated a peace with Spain a decade earlier, relied on God's grace, the free will of human beings and individual responsibility; they were supported by the bourgeoisie in the coastal cities and campaigned for a federal, tolerant state. Franciscus Gomarus (1563 Bruges, West Flanders, now Belgium–Groningen 1641), the second Professor, won the support of the gentry and military for his strict position: a centralized Calvinist state, which excluded Catholics, Jews and other Protestant groups (Denzler/Andresen 2004). Prince Maurice, who had fought the war against Spain and was opposed to Oldenbarnevelt's peace negotiations, supported the Gomarians. The synod declared the Remonstrants heretics; death penalties, deportations, etc. followed.

Schillemans' engraving is located in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam (inv. no. L1989/1, 50.5 x 72.3 cm, with text; picture descriptions in Bos/de Haan (1966: no. 11), Wegener Sleeswyk (2004: 126ff.), van der Waals (2006: 34, no. 20) and de Snoo (2007: 62); for national history, see North (2003) and Gorski (2003: chap. 2).

The ship is under full sail, carries a pennant with the Dutch lion and the flag of the Dutch republic of the seven provinces at the foremast, while the mainmast carries the pennant of Prince Maurice with the motto *tandem fit surculus arbor*—finally, the shoot turns into a tree. A band is attached to the main sail with the motto *Concordia Res Parvae Crescunt*—harmony allows small things to grow.

Inspired by Horace (65 BC–8 AD) 'O navis referent' (Carmina 1:14)¹, Schillemans equips his ship with many classical symbols, explained in Dutch and Latin in a text band that runs around the picture (not shown here). Sitting in the middle of the ship, seven women carry each the coat of arms of a province and are surrounded by four virtues: love with a flaming heart and laurel wreath, peace with a lamb, faith with a cross and patience with a snaffle. A hatless man with a long beard to their left is Bogerman. Prince Maurice stands at the helm, surrounded by important officials and additional virtues: in front of him justice with a

¹ This refers to the first line of Horaces's poem: O navis, referent in mare te novi ... (O LUCKLESS bark! new waves will force you back to sea ...). To many this is a Roman ship of state poem confronting the results of the battle of Actium in 31 BC.

pair of scales; behind him love with children; furthermore, harmony with a bundle of arrows; prudence with a bowl and vase; power with a column; victory with a spear and glory with a trumpet. Hope accompanies three admirals in the bow. In the sea, only members of the Catholic clergy, together with the three vices of jealousy, tyranny and deception, try in vain to stop the voyage of the ship. In heaven, we find only positive aspects depicted: truth, surrounded by angels, with the Dutch state bible in her hand; it radiates rays that brighten up the world and infidels, here American Indians and Turks, who gaze in wonder at the new Jerusalem of the North. This picture must of course also be read as a continuation and replica of Matthias Zündt (pp. 34 ff.) and Hans Weigel the Elder (pp. 37 ff.).

Drunk with victory, the iconoclasts (Körner 2004) celebrate themselves—ironically, they do so in a religiously inspired image of their newly gained independent statehood.

At the end of this picture cycle, i.e. at the turn of the 17th century, this pair of pictures points at the same time to the return of the medieval unity of faith and rule (Schillemans) and to a future shaped by both the modern privatization of faith and political rule relieved of its direct religious links (the ship of church). Particular circumstances in the Netherlands explain this non-simultaneity: an 80-year war of liberation against Catholic Spain; the foundation and drive provided by a more radical Protestant, Calvinist faith; the initial predominance of the agrarian hinterland over the more liberal coastal cities; due to early centralization, the temporary inability to socially 'pillarize' the religious landscape, which followed a pattern of territorial North-South segregation, with the help of the imperial formula of *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose realm, his religion). However, this reformed ship of state church was soon to show fine cracks: Although the practice continued that public servants had to belong to the reformed church, religious tolerance grew in private and partially hidden since the later 17th century, making the Netherlands the sanctuary for many religious minorities. The great social pillarization did only vanish after the Second World War.

1620. 'The Ship of State.' Frans Schillemans

1620, Frans Schillemans
(1575–?), *Het Ship van Staat*
(The Ship of State; a copper
engraving, Museum Boymans
Van Beuningen, Rotterdam).



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1494. 'On Antichrist.' Albrecht Dürer

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Second half of the 16th century. 'The Ship of the Papal Church.' Unknown artist

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1580-1590. Detail of the Ship of State as Mechanical Galleon and Clock. Hans Schlottheim

1580-1590, Hans Schlottheim (1547–1625),
Detail of the Ship of State as Mechanical Gal-
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